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PREFACE.

THE principal scene of these volumes is laid in the earlier periods of the French Revolution. The history of that fearful time has been already given by able hands. But the historian loves to sketch his portraits on a large scale:—
—colossal crimes; calamities which overwhelm nations at a blow; characters of dazzling ability, or enormous guilt; are the favourite subjects of the historic pencil. It remains for works of another dimension, to delineate the more obscure miseries, which make the true wretchedness of revolution.

It was not in the field, though the generations of France were swept from the earth by millions; nor in the heroic martyrdom of the scaffold, though it streamed with royal and noble gore; that the keenest agonies were inflicted on the nation. Their place was the fireside. It was in the merciless insults, the protracted imprisonments, the returnless exiles, the cruel plunders, and the desperate massacres of the middle and lower orders of France, that the heaviest suffering was inflicted on the land. It was not in the fall of the statesman, the noble, or even of the monarch, that the true malignity of the rebellion was shown; it was in its penetration to every recess of human feeling; in its wounding every shape of society; in its universal oppression;

in its remorseless withering of every natural pursuit and faculty of man; in bankruptcy, famine, and despair; that the iron of the Revolution "entered into the soul."

The general tendency of Europe at this hour is to political change. But the true peril is not to be looked for on the Continent. The frivolities of foreign life waste all national energy for either good or ill; the flame exhausts itself through the mere feebleness of the fuel. The ball-room patriotism and the coffee-house conspiracy are equally contemptible. Even the French Revolution was only the madness of a mob, justly terminating in the chain.

The real danger would be in an English revolution. If the popular mind, with its proverbial strength, steadiness, and courage, should once be thoroughly inflamed, the conflagration would spread to every throne of Europe. A republic in England would republicanise the world; turn all the old institutions of society into dust and ashes; and leave nothing to posterity but the task of deploring our rashness, or hopelessly struggling to restore our ruins.

Without desiring to say, that these volumes have been written solely for the purpose of giving a public lesson, their writer will consider himself fortunate, if they should assist in impressing the conviction, that in all violent political change, the humblest ranks are sure to suffer most; that their bodies are used merely to fill up the trench over which their leaders pass to power; that their severest sacrifices only turn a demagogue into a tyrant; and that the only alternatives of a democracy are national decay, or military despotism.

In the sketch of the British campaigns in the Netherlands, some attempt is made to do justice to the gallantry of

exploits, which, though obscured by the broader triumphs of later times, ought never to be forgotten. The campaign of 1793 was one of the most brilliant in the annals of war.

In alluding to the Statesmen who fought the more dubious battle of the Constitution, the writer has regarded them, less as the heads of party, than as illustrating that copiousness of intellectual power, and that exhaustless material of national greatness, which are created by the institutions of England. He passes down their ranks, as he might along a gallery of their statues; seeing only their imperishable features, and mingling his recollections with the reverence due to the grave.

MARSTON;

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A STATESMAN.

CHAPTER I.

Why I give the world a sketch of my career through it, is not among the discoveries which I intend to make. I have been a public man; let those who know public life imagine what interest may be felt in reviewing the scenes and struggles of which such a life is full. May there not be a pleasure in conceiving once again the shapes and circumstances of things, as one sitting by his fireside sees castles and cottages, men, women, and children, in the embers, and shapes them the better for the silence and the solitude round him? Let the reader choose what reason he will. I have seen the world, and fought my way through it; have struggled, like greater men, have risen, like lesser; have been flung into the most rapid current of the most hurried, wild, and vivid time that the world has ever seen, and have floated. I have *lived* through the last fifty years. In the vigour of life, I mingled in some of the greatest transactions, and was mingled with some of the greatest men, of my time.

I have been soldier, adventurer, traveller, statesman. I have been lover, husband, father,—poor and opulent, obscure and conspicuous. There are few sensations of our nature, or circumstances of our life, which I have not undergone—alternately suffering to the verge of despair, and enjoying like an epicurean deity.

Every man is born for a special purpose, and with a special passion. From my first thought, the passion to be known and felt, even at the hazard of being undone, was *my* impulse. It has been the impulse of all men who have ever impressed the world. With great talents it is all-commanding: the thunderbolt in the hands of Jove. Even with inferior faculties, and I make no pretence to superiority in mine, it singularly excites, urges, and animates.

Ambition was the original passion of my nature. It rose before me, as the sun ascends before the Indian, until its fire drives him to the shade. I, too, have worshipped like the Gheber, but before no unhallowed fire.

I was that luckless being, a second son of one of the oldest families in England. If I had been the seventh son of the seventh son, I should, by all the laws of juggling, have been a conjuror; but I was a generation too early for fame. My father was an earl, and as proud of his titles as if he had won them at Crecy or Poictiers, and not in the campaigns of Westminster, consummated on the backstairs of Whitehall. He had served his country, as he termed it, in a long succession of parliaments; and served her still more, as his country neighbours termed it, by accepting a peerage, which opened the county to any other representative among the sons of men. He was a strong-built, stern-countenanced, and haughty-tongued personage; by some thought a man of sense; by others a fool, with all his depth, arising from his darkness. The little love which I could afford for any human being, was for another and a different order of existence. Boys have a natural fondness for their mother; and mine was gentle, timid, and fond. She perhaps spoiled me by indulgence as much as my lord and father spoiled me by severity; but indulgence is the pleasanter of the two, and I followed the course of nature, and gave her whatever heart I have.

I still remember her. She was remarkably indebted to nature, at least for externals. Her beauty worked miracles; for now and then I have observed even my father's eye fixed on her with something of admiration, but the admiration was soon absorbed in the job in hand, and he turned away, to scribble to the minister.

I had two sisters, sweet little creatures, one with black

eyes and the other with blue. This is enough for their description. My four brothers were four rough, bold, well-looking animals, all intended for ambassadors, admirals, generals, and secretaries of state; for my father had too long tasted of the honey of official life to think that there was any other food for a gentleman in the world. I am strongly inclined to surmise that he would have preferred a pencil purloined from the treasury to all the cedars of Lebanon.

I was sent to Eton. At this great school of the aristocracy, would-be and real, barons and dukes *in esse*, and the Herald's Office alone, or Bedlam, knows what *in posse*, I remained for the customary number of years. If the first purpose of all great public institutions is to stand still, the great schools of England, fifty years ago, were righteous adherents to their contract, for they never moved. The world might whirl round them as it would; there remained the grey milestones, only measuring the speed with which everything on the road passed them. This, among all our great public schools, has fortunately changed in later years. But the change must proceed; the venerable cripples must throw by their crutches, and try the use of bone and blood. Flogging and fagging are the education for a footman; they disgrace the common sense and offend the feelings of a manly people.

On my delighted release from this supreme laboratory of statesmen, I found the condition of things considerably altered at Mortimer Castle. I had left it a stately, but rather melancholy-looking household; I now found the mansion glittering in all the novelty of French furniture, gilding, and *ormolu*, and crowded with fashion and all its menial tribe. All was new, in all the kinds of novelty; the very avenue was trimmed until it resembled a wood on the stage; and the grounds, once sober and still enough for a Jaques to escape from the sight of humankind, and hold dialogues with the deer, were now levelled, opened, shorn, and shaved, with the precision of a retired citizen's elysium.

The heads of the family were equally changed, my mother, unhappily, for the worse. Still her fine eyes beamed with joy as she threw herself upon my neck, and

murmured some of those mingled blessings and raptures, which have a language of their own. But the grand change was in the earl. My father, whom I had left rather degenerating into the shape which three courses and a bottle of claret a day inflict on country gentlemen "who live at home at ease," was now braced and laced, costumed in the newest fashion, and overflowing with exuberant volatility. He breathed of Bond-street. He welcomed me with an ardour which astonished much more than it delighted me, talked fragments of French, and, after enchanting me in all kinds of strange ways, concluded by making an attempt to kiss me on both cheeks, like a Frenchman. My Eton recollections enabled me to resist the paternal embrace. At length the wonder was simplified by the discovery that the family had but just returned from a continental residence of a couple of years—a matter of which no letter or word had given me the knowledge at my school. My next discovery was, that an old uncle had died, and left us money enough to carry the county; and the last and crowning one was, that my eldest brother had just been returned for the North Riding.

This was such an accumulation of good luck as might have thrown any elderly gentleman off the balance of his gravity. But, from my first sense, or insensibility, I had felt no great delight in the glories of our household; and after a remarkably brief period, I openly petitioned to be sent to college, or to the world's end!

My petition was listened to with a mixture of contempt for my want of taste, and astonishment at my presumption. But, before the reply had time to burst out, I was told that at the end of one week more I should be suffered to take my way; that week being devoted to a round of special entertainments in honour of my brother's election.

To keep a house in commotion, to produce mysterious conversations, conferences without number, and confidences without end, and alike to perturb maidens' hearts and swell milliners' bills, let me recommend an amateur play in the country. The very mention of it awoke every soul in the castle; caps and complexions were matched, and costumes criticized, from morning till night, among the

ladies. The "acting drama" was turned over leaf by leaf by the gentlemen.

First of the first, we had all the charming difficulty of fixing on the play. The dullest and dreariest of our country Rosciuses were uniformly for comedy; but the fair sex have a leaning to the tragic muse. We had one or two who would have had no objection to be piquant in Lady Teazle, or petulant in Lady Townley; but we had half a dozen Desdemonas and Ophelias. The soul of an O'Neil was in every one of our party conscious of a pair of good eyes, a tolerable shape, and the captivation which, in some way or other, most women in existence contrive to discover in their own share of the gifts of nature. At length the votes carried it for "Romeo and Juliet." The eventful night came; the *élite* of the county poured in, the theatre was crowded; all was expectancy before the curtain; all was terror, nervousness, and awkwardness behind. The orchestra performed its flourish, and the curtain rose.

To do the heads of the household justice, they had done their duty as managers. The theatre, though but a temporary building, projecting from the ball-room into one of the gardens, was worthy of the very handsome apartment which formed its vestibule. The skill of a famous London architect had been exerted on this fairy erection, and Verona itself had perhaps, in its palmiest days, seldom exhibited a display of more luxurious elegance.

But the play was—must I confess it? though I myself figured as the Romeo—utterly deplorable. The men perplexed their parts; the ladies lost their voices, and carried on their loves, their sorrows, and even their scoldings, in a melancholy murmur.

However, everything has an end; and we had carried Juliet to the tomb of all the Capulets, the chaunt was done, and the mourners were gathered in the green-room. I was standing, book in hand, preparing for the last agonies of a love very imperfectly committed to memory, when I heard a slight confusion in the court-yard, and shortly after the rattle of a post-chaise. The sound subsided, and I was summoned to my post at the entrance to the place where the lovely Juliet lay entranced. The pasteboard gate gave way to knocks enforced with an energy which called down

rapturous applause; and in all the tortures of a broken heart, I summoned my fair bride to my arms. But there was no reply. I again invoked her; she was silent. Her trance was evidently of the deepest order. I rose from the ground, where I had been "taking the measure of my unmade grave," and, approaching the bier, ventured to drop a despairing hand upon her pillow. To my utter surprise it was vacant. If I had been another Shakspeare, the situation was a fine one for a display of original genius. But I was paralyzed. A sense of the general embarrassment was my first impression, and I was absolutely struck dumb. But this was soon shaken off. My next was a sense of the particular burlesque of my situation; I burst out into laughter, in which the whole house joined, and rushed off the stage.

But weightier matters soon absorbed the universal interest. The disappearance of the heroine from the stage was speedily accounted for by her flight in the carriage whose wheels had disturbed my study. But whither fled, why, and with whom? We now found other defalcations in our numbers; the Chevalier Paul Charlatanski, a gallant Polish exile who contrived to pass a very pleasant time on the merit of his misfortunes, was also missing. His valet, his valise, every atom that ever appertained to him, had vanished. The confusion now thickened. I never saw the master of the mansion in such a rage before. Pistols and post-chaises were in instant requisition. He vowed that the honour of his house was involved in the transaction, and that nothing should tempt him to slumber until he had brought back the fugitive fair one to the arms of her noble family; my Juliet being the ward of a duke, and being also entitled to about twenty thousand pounds a year on her coming of age.

As for the unlucky, or rather the lucky, chevalier, nothing human ever received a hotter shower of surmise and sarcasm. That he was an "impostor, a swindler, a spy," was the earl's conviction, declared in the most public manner; his indignation was of so *ultra* a quality, his revenge so fiery, and his tongue so fluent, as to make me suspect that he had other motives than the insulted laws of hospitality. I reached this discovery, too, in time. The de-

clining health of my gentle mother had made him speculate on the chances of survivorship. He certainly was no longer young, and he had never been an Adonis. Yet his glass did not altogether throw him into the rank of the "impracticable." In short, he had quietly theorized himself into the future husband of the ducal ward, and felt on this occasion as an earl should, plundered before his face of a clear twenty thousand a year.

But he was not to suffer alone. On further inquiry, it was ascertained that the chevalier's valet had *not* gone with him. This fellow, a Frenchman, had taken wing in another direction, and carried off *his* turtle-dove, too; not one of the full-blown roses of the servants' hall, but a rosebud, the heiress of one of the bulkiest squires of the Riding, a man of countless beeves and blunders; one of our Yorkshire Nimrods, "a mighty hunter," until club dinners and home-brewed ale had tied him to his arm-chair, and gout had made him a man of peace and flannels—the fattest weed in the swamps of Yorkshire. The young lady had been intended for my eldest brother, as a convenient medium of connection between two estates palpably made for matrimony. Thus we received two mortal blows in one evening; never was family pilfered more ignominiously; never was amateur play more peevishly catastrophized.

It must be owned, to the credit of "private theatricals," that the play had no slight share in the plot. Our play had cost us two elopements;—two shots between wind and water, which threatened to send the ship down;—two breakings of that heart which men carry in their purse. I laughed, and the world laughed too. But I was then thoughtless, and the world is always malicious. From that night I date the family decline.

Of course the two whiskered vagabonds could not be suffered to carry off their laurels without an attempt to crop them, and my father and brother were too much in earnest in their objects to lose time. In half an hour four post-horses to each britchska whirled them off;—my father to take the northern road, some hints of Gretna having transpired in the slipshod confidences of the servants' hall—my brother to pursue on the Dover road, conjecturing

that, as the fox runs to his earth, the Frenchman always speeds for Paris.

The crowd dispersed, after having stayed long enough to glean all that they could of the family misfortune, and fix appointments for every day in the week, to meet each other and make the most of the whole transaction. But still a tolerable number of the steadier hands remained. I was voted to the head of the table, more claret was ordered, the wreck of the general supper was cleared away for one of a snugger kind; and we drew our chairs together. Toast followed toast, and the party became communicative. Family histories, not excepting our own, were now discussed with a confidence new to my boyish conjectures; Charlatanski's career abroad and at home seemed to be as well known as if he had been pilloried in the county town; the infinite absurdity of the noble duke who had suffered him to make his way under his roof, and the palpable *penchant* of his ward, next underwent discussion; until the ignorance of my noble father on the subject gave, with me, the death-blow to his penetration. The valet contrivances which had won the primrose heart of my brother's intended spouse, I found equally notorious; the earl's projects were both declared as plainly as if he had pronounced them *vivâ voce;* and before we parted "for the night" I had made up my mind, once for all, that neither character nor cunning can be long concealed in this world; that the craftiest impostor is but a clumsier kind of clown; and that the most dexterous disguise is but a waste of time.

On the sixth day an express announced that the earl had arrived at a village about fifty miles off, on his way home, wounded, and in great danger. I instantly broke up the convivial party, and set out to meet him. To the imagination of a boy, as I was then, nothing could be more startling than even the aspect of the habitation which now held the haughty Earl of Mortimer. After passing through a variety of dungeon-like rooms—for the house had once been a workhouse, or something of the kind—I was ushered into the chamber where my unhappy father lay. The village doctor, and one or two of the wise people of the neighbourhood, were the only attendants; and the long faces of

those persons, seconded by the professional shake of the doctor's head, told me that they at least had no hope. It was not so with the sufferer himself, for he talked as largely and loftily of what he was to do within the next ten years, as if he was to survive a century. He still breathed rage and retribution against the chevalier, and actually seemed to regard the lady's choice as a particular infraction of personal claims. He had pursued the fugitives day and night, until the pursuit threw him into a kind of fever. While under this paroxysm he had met the enamoured pair, but it was on their way from that forge on the Border where so many heavy chains have been manufactured. Useless as challenging was then, he challenged the husband. The parties met, and my father received a bullet in his body, while he had the satisfaction of lodging one in his antagonist's knee-pan. The chevalier was doomed to waltz no more; but his bullet was fatal.

I say no more of this most distressing time; a few days, only enough to collect the branches of the family round the bed, terminated everything. I was grieved more than I conceived it possible for my nature to grieve at any misfortune. I hung over the bed. I felt an indescribable sense of loss. The calm, pale features of the form before me seemed to me more those of my father than, in life, they had ever been. I could not be prevailed on to leave the chamber until the last duties were about to be paid.

Matters now took a new shape at the castle. My brother returned, to find himself its possessor. His journey had been equally unproductive with my unfortunate father's. By dint of bribing the postilions, he had at first overpassed the fugitives on the Dover road. But as he stopped to dine in Canterbury, where he prepared a *posse* of constables for their reception, he had unluckily been accosted by an old London acquaintance who had accidentally fixed his quarters there for a day or two, "seeking whom he might devour." The dinner was followed by a carouse, the carouse by a "quiet game," or games, which lasted till the next day; and when my brother rose, with the glow of a superb sunset giving him the first intimation that he was among the living, he made the double discovery that he was stripped to the last shilling of five hundred

pounds, and that the Frenchman and his prize had quietly changed horses at the same hotel half a dozen hours before.

CHAPTER II.

THE young may forget quickly, but they feel keenly. The event which I had just witnessed threw a shade over me, which, in the want of any vigorous occupation, began to affect my health. I rambled through the woods in a kind of dreamy idleness of mind, which took but little note of anything, time included. But, in this earth, no one can be singular with impunity. The gentlemen were "convinced" that my meditations were heavy with unpaid college bills; and the ladies, from high to low, from "Tilburina, mad in white satin," to her "confidante, mad in white linen," were all of opinion that some one among their peerless selves had destroyed the "five wits" of young Mr. Marston. I had only to escape.

There were also higher matters to move me. Clouds were gathering on the world; the times were fitful; the air was thick with rumours from abroad; the sleep of the Continent was breaking up; and Europe lay in anxious and strange expectancy. We were then in the first stage of the French Revolution!

I resolved to linger no more; and being ushered, "by appointment," into the library, I promptly stated my wishes, and demanded my portion, to try my fortune in the world.

Our conference, if it had but little of the graces of diplomacy, had much more than its usual decision. It was abrupt and unhesitating. My demand had evidently taken his "lordship" by surprise. He started and with a flushed cheek asked "Whether I was lunatic, or supposed him to be so?"

"Neither the one nor the other," was my answer. "But to waste life here is out of the question. I demand the means of beginning a profession."

"Are you aware, sir," was the reply, "that our interest is lost since the change of ministers, that my estate is loaded with encumbrances, and that every profession is overstocked? What can you do in the crowd?"

"What others have done—what I should do in a crowd in the streets—push some aside, get before others; if made way for, be civil; if resisted, trample; it has been the history of thousands, why not mine?"

My doctrine was new to this son of indulgence, who inquired, with a smile which made the nearest possible approach to a sneer, "whether I had anything more to say?"

I had more, and of the kind that least suited his feelings. I demanded "my property."

The effect of those two words was electrical. The apathy of the exquisite was at an end, and in a voice of the most indignant displeasure he rapidly demanded, "whether I expected money to fall from the moon? whether I was not aware of the expense of keeping up the castle? whether I supposed that my mother's jointure and my sisters' portions could ever be paid, without dipping the rent-roll deeper still?" and, after various and bitter expostulation, "What right had I to suppose that I was worth the smallest coin of the realm, except by his bounty?"

One query answered them all. "My lord, is it not true that I am entitled to five thousand pounds?"

"Five thousand ——!" what word filled the interval I must not say. He saw that I stood his gaze with but few symptoms of giving way, and he changed his tactics with an adroitness that did honour to his training. Approaching me, he held out his hand. "Charles, why should *we* quarrel about trifles? I was really not acquainted with the circumstance to which you allude, but I shall look into it without delay. Pray can you tell me the when, the where, the how?"

"Your questions may be easily answered. The *when* was at the death of our uncle, the *where* was in his will, and the *how*—in any way your lordship pleases." The truce was now made; he begged of me, "as I valued *his* feelings," to drop the formality of his title, to regard him simply as a brother, and to rely on his wish to forward every object that might gratify my inclination.

Our conference broke up.

The hour and the scene were what the poet pronounces "fit to cure all sadness but despair." Noble old trees, the

"roof star-proof" overhead, the cool velvet grass under my feet, glimpses of sunlight striking through the trunks, the freshened air coming in gusts across the lake, like new life, bathing my burning forehead and feverish hands—the whole unrivalled sweetness of the English landscape was around, to soften and subdue me.

I had reached a rising ground which commanded a large extent of the surrounding country. The western sky was a blaze of colours, all pouring over that succession of forest, cultured field, and mountain-top, which make the English view, if not the most sublime, the most touching of the earth.

As I stood on the hill, gazing round, to enjoy every shape and shade at leisure, my eye turned on the castle. It spoiled all my serenity at once. I felt that it was a spot from which I was excluded by nature; that it belonged to others so wholly, as scarcely by any conceivable chance ever to be mine; and that I could remain within its walls no longer, but with a sense of uselessness and shame.

I was hastening home, brooding over bitter thoughts, when I suddenly rushed against some one, whom I nearly overthrew. "Bless me, Mr. Marston, is it you?" told me that I had run down my old tutor, Mr. Vincent, the parson of the parish.

Parsons, above all men, are the better for wives and children, for without them they are wonderfully apt to grow either saturnine or stupid. Of course there are exceptions. Vincent had a wife, not much younger than himself, to whom he always spoke with the courtesy of a *preux chevalier*. They had, as is generally the fate of the clergy, a superfluity of daughters; four or five, I think. All round their little vicarage was so pure, so quiet, and so neat—there was such an aspect of order, and even of elegance, however inexpensive—that its contrast with the glaring and restless tumult of the "great house" was irresistible.

I acknowledge myself no sentimentalist, but I suppose that all is not lead or iron within me, from my sense of scenes like this. In my wildest hour, the sight of fields and gardens has been a kind of febrifuge to me—has conveyed a feeling of tranquillity to my mind, as if it drank the silence and the freshness, as the flowers drink the dew.

I have often thus experienced a sudden soothing, which checked the hot current of my follies or frenzies, and made me think that there were better things than the baubles of the world.

I mention this evening, because it decided my future life, or at least the boldest, and perhaps the most trying, portion of it. We had an hour or two of the little variations of placid amusements which belong to all parsonages in romances, but which here were reality.

The moon, shining in through panes covered with honeysuckle and fragrance of all kinds, at length warned me that I was intruding on a household primitive in their hours as in everything else, and I rose to take my leave. But I could not be altogether parted with yet. It happened that they saw in me a most amusing guest, while, to my own conception, I had been singularly spiritless: but the little anecdotes which were trite to me had been novelties to them. The girls at length put on their bonnets, and looking like a group of Titania and her nymphs, as they bounded along in the moonlight, escorted us to the boundary of the vicar's territory.

We were about to separate, with all the pretty formalities of village leave-taking, when their father, in the act of shaking hands with me, fixed his eye on mine, and insisted on seeing me home. Whether the thought occurred to him that I had still something on my mind which was not to be trusted within sight of a brook that formed the boundary to the castle grounds, I know not, but I complied, and the girls were sent homewards.

I took his arm, and we walked on for a while in silence. At length, slackening his pace, and speaking in a tone whose earnestness struck me, "Charles," said he, "has anything peculiarly painful lately happened to you?—if so, speak out."

I was taken unawares, and, not having yet formed a distinct conception of my own grievances, promptly denied that I had any.

"It may be so," said my friend; "and yet once or twice this evening I saw your cheek alternately flush and grow pale, with a suddenness that alarmed me for your health. I observed your voice falter, as if some spasm of soul had

shot across you; and I unquestionably saw that rare sight in the eyes of man, a tear."

I denied this instance of weakness stoutly; but the old man's importunities prevailed, and by degrees I told him a statement of my anxieties at home.

The vicar, with all his simplicity of manner, was a man of powerful and practical understanding. He had been an eminent scholar at his university, and was in a fair way for all its distinctions, when he thought proper to fall desperately in love. This, of course, demolished his prospects at once. I never heard his subsequent history in detail; but he had left England, and undergone a long period of disheartening and distress.

Vincent had never told his story; but a rumour reached his college of his having been seen in the Austrian uniform on the Transylvanian frontier, during the campaigns of the Prince of Coburg, and Laudohn, against the Turks.

I have always held that the life of man's mind, where man *has* a mind—which is not always the case—is a thing of fits and starts. I even doubt whether any one who will take the trouble to recollect will not be able to lay his finger on the precise periods at which new views of everything suddenly opened before him, and he emerged at once, if not into new powers, at least into a new use of them. My manhood was still to come, but with a more severe instructor.

As we were passing slowly through the plantations encircling the castle with all the noble and profuse shelter and ornament which our ancestors loved, a distant sound of music came on the wind. I then remembered, for the first time, that my brother on that evening gave a ball to the county; and a sudden feeling of the difference of our lots in life came painfully over me;—the course of secure wealth and English enjoyment, contrasted with the dependence and wandering which must form the existence of myself and so many thousands of younger brothers.

I was awakened from my reverie by the voice of my companion.

"Do you know, Charles," said he, "what changed the whole current of my life—what, in fact, brought me back to England?"—there was a slight pause—"what made me

a Christian? It was such a night as this. As you now know the chief part of my story, I need have no further concealment on the subject. I had recovered from my wounds, and was preparing to set out for Vienna, when, one night, a tempest blew down our tents, and left us to trust to the open air till morning. Tempests in the south are violent, but they are generally brief, and this gale cleared the sky of every cloud. As I lay on the ground and gazed on the unusual splendour of the stars, the thought occurred to me,—Why should doubts of a future state ever come into the mind of man? Why should he hesitate as to its reality? Was it not there, indeed, before his eyes? Were not the very regions of future existence already within the reach of one of his senses? Why might they not yet be within the reach of all? Of course I do not give you all the vague conceptions which passed through my mind; but the permanence, grandeur, and astonishing multitude of those bright worlds, impressed themselves on me with a new force. I had known all those things before, but on this night I felt them. My next thoughts were of the power, the wisdom, and the majesty of that Mightiest of Beings, by whom all those had been formed, moved, and sustained through thousands of years. I need not follow the history of my conversion; for a conversion it was. When I looked round me on the sleeping troops, I saw nothing but clods of the valley, gallant hearts, but as insensible to their high inheritance as the chargers they rode. My heart was moved towards them; and perhaps, in some subsequent instances, I succeeded in giving them my own ideas."

I mentioned the church, as the profession "which my mother had suggested," but "for which I did not conceive either my temper or my habits suitable."

"You are right, then, in abandoning the idea altogether," was the answer; "and yet I know no profession more capable of employing all the energies of a vigorous mind. I am not now talking of mitres; they can fall to but few. I speak of the prospects which it opens to all; its power of exerting the largest influence for the highest purposes; the possession of fame without its emptiness, and the indulgence of knowledge without its vanity."

"And yet," said I, naming one or two of our clerical slumberers, "the profession seems not to be, in all instances, a very disturbing one."

"Those men," was the answer, "would have been slumberers at the bar, in the senate, or in the field. I may be prejudiced in favour of the choice which I have made so long since, and which I have never found reason to repent. But I have not the slightest wish to prejudice any other one in its favour. There is no profession which more requires a peculiar mind—a spirit of contentment, with whatever consciousness of being overlooked; of patience, with whatever hopelessness of distinction; of labour, for the sake of duty; and of learning, with few to share, few to admire, and fewer still to reward."

"If my father had lived," said I, "it was his intention to have tried my chance in diplomacy."

"Probably enough, for he had figured in that line himself. I remember him secretary of embassy at Vienna. Perhaps you will scarcely believe that I, too, have had my experience on the subject. Accident once made me an attaché to our envoy at Naples. The life is not a severe one. As the Frenchman said of the academy, 'We had nothing to do, and we did it in perfection.' We had our occupations, too; for we had the attendance on the court days, a business of as much formality as if the fate of mankind depended on its performance. Then we had the attendance on the opera at night, a matter nearly as tiresome. The post from England reached Naples but once a week, and scarcely once a month conveyed any intelligence that was worth the carriage.—Well, what think you of the bar?"

"I have no head for its study, and no heart for its employment."

"Yet it leads more rapidly to rank than any other profession under the sun, profit beyond counting, and a peerage. Those are no bad things."

"I never was born to sit on the woolsack. On the whole, if I were to follow my own inclination, I should be a soldier."

I have already said that I have been, throughout life, a kind of believer in omens. I have seen such a multitude

of things decided by some curious coincidence, some passing occurrence, some of those seeming trifles for which it is impossible to account, but which occur at the instant when the mind is wavering on the balance. While we were rambling onward (discussing the merits and demerits of the profession of arms), we heard the winding of the mail-guard's horn. I sprang the fence, and inquired the last news from the metropolis. "Paris was in an uproar—the king's guards had taken up arms for the people—the Bastille was stormed!"

If I had hesitated before, this news would have decided me; but it struck me as the beginning of a time when the lazy quietude of years was about to be broken up, and room made for all who were inclined to exert themselves. Before we had reached the level lawns, I had settled all the difficulties which might impede the career of less fortunate individuals; time and chance were managed with the adroitness of a projector; and if Bellona had been one of the Nine Muses, my speculations could not have been more poetical.

The news from France produced a sensation throughout England, totally indescribable at the present day. Every tongue and every heart was full of it, for it offered something for every mind of the million to seize on—like the waterspout, such as I have seen it, sweeping over the bosom of the Atlantic, half descending from the skies, and half ascending from the deep; every second man whom one met gave it credit for a different origin, some looking at the upper portion, some at the lower; while, to the dread of all, the huge phenomenon was blackening, gathering, and rushing onward, threatening to turn all above into darkness, and all below into storm. It made the great subject of parliamentary eloquence, and parliament was never more eloquent; it filled the speeches of the factious, and faction was never more daring; it was hailed by the shout of the multitude, and it disturbed the fireside with fear and hope, with wishing and wonder. I liked excitement, wherever it was to be found. The barriers to distinction were still too firmly closed against the younger son of an embarrassed family, not to suggest many a wish for whatever chance might burst the gate or blow up the

rampart. Our great schools fill all our heads with the superb fanaticism of the Brutuses and Catos, and the splendid hypocrisies of Demosthenes and Cicero. The boy who is not a republican on leaving their gates, has neither heart nor head. Time, trial, and the world, alone rectify those extravagances. My first effort in political life was an harangue to the rabble of the next borough, conceived in the most Gallic style. A note, by no means too gentle in its tone, was instantly despatched to my noble brother, inquiring why he did not contrive to keep the minor branches of his family in better order, and threatening him with the withdrawal of the county patronage. My demand of a commission in the army was now no longer answered by the head of our house with astonishment at the loftiness of my expectations, and statements of the utter emptiness of the family exchequer. The result of his brief correspondence with Downing-street was a letter notifying that "his Majesty was pleased to accept of my services in a regiment of the Guards."

No time was lost in forwarding me to make my bow at the Horse Guards; and my noble brother lost as little time in making me put my hand to a paper in which, for prompt payment, I relinquished one half of my legacy. But what cared I for money? I had obtained a profession in which money was contemptible, the only purse the military chest, and the only prize, like Nelson's, a "peerage, or Westminster Abbey." The world was before me; and trite and trifling objects were no longer to occupy my time. I felt like one who, after wandering for days through the depths of an American forest, suddenly reaches its border, and sees before him the boundless prairie. What were horses, dogs, and country dinners, to the world of London and of life? The ideas which I conceived of men and things, of my own fortunes, and the fortunate exercise of my own powers, were of an order which, in my calmer days, has often made me smile: yet what is the whole early life of man but a predisposition to intellectual fever? and I was then throbbing on the fiery verge of the disease.

CHAPTER III.

I SHALL say but little of my first sensations on reaching London. Yet I must acknowledge that its first sight repelled me. I had lived in field and forest, and delighted in the freshness and beauty of nature. I had lived in stately halls, and been surrounded by bowing attendants; and now, with my mind full of the calm magnificence of English noble life, I felt myself flung into the midst of a numberless, miscellaneous, bustling crowd, all rushing on, regardless of everything but themselves, and I was nothing, an atom in the chaos, a grain of dust on the great chariot-wheel of society, a lonely and obscure struggler in the mighty current of human life, which rolled along the sullen channels of the most cheerless, though the most majestic, capital of the globe.

For the first week I was absolutely unable to collect my thoughts. I remember that, when I first saw the Horse Guards, to which, of course, one of my earliest visits was paid, I found no slight difficulty in thinking of it as only a remarkably clownish mass of brick and stone, crowded with clerks. To my excited imagination it was the very palace of war; the stern spot from which the thunderbolts of England were to be launched; the centre and the stronghold of that irresistible influence with which England sways and moulds mankind. The India House was another of my reveries. To my eyes it was invested with the mystery and the dignity of Orientalism. I thought only of the powers by which rajahs were raised and overthrown, of the mandates which spread war and restored peace over regions as wide as Europe. I had rambling visions of armies of elephants, superb cavalry, and chieftains covered with gold and diamonds.

Among the wonders of the time, there was one which struck me with prodigious force, which has remained on my recollection to this hour, and which still survives with undiminished vividness. It was the acting of Siddons.

Siddons was then witching the world—witching, in its more solemn sense; for though her smile was exquisite, she might have sat for the picture of a Sibyl or a Pythoness. The stage had never seen her equal, and will probably

never see another so completely formed to command all its influences. Yet her beauty, her acting, and even her movement, were characteristic, and their character was noble melancholy. I never saw so mournful a countenance, combined with so much beauty. Her voice, though grand, was melancholy—her air, though superb, was melancholy —her very smile was melancholy; and yet there was so much of living intellect in her expression, such vast variety of conception in her look and gesture,—she so deeply awoke the feelings, or so awfully impressed the mind, that in scenes the most remote from this characteristic of her countenance and her genius, in warlike triumph, in royal grandeur, in the ecstasies of joy, or in the abandonment of the heart to passion, she ruled the stage. and made the actress be wholly forgotten in the strong reality of the hour.

It may be easily presumed that I saw this extraordinary being whenever it was possible. But her *chef d'œuvre*, in my eyes, was the "wife of Macbeth." The part seemed made for her, by something of that instinct which in olden times combined the poet and the prophet in one. It had the grandeur and loftiness, mingled with the solemnity and mystery, which especially belonged to the character of her beauty.

Such was the power of her performance in this part, that probably, if a thousand described it, each would mark some peculiar trait, yet all feel the same admiration. She entered, with Macbeth's letter in her hand; her step was hurried, as if she had but just glanced over the letter, and had been eager to escape from the crowd of attendants, to reperuse it alone. She then read on, in a firm, calm voice, until she came to the passage which proved the supernatural spirit of the prediction. "They have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burnt with desire to question them further, they made themselves into *air*, and *vanished!*" As she was about to pronounce the last words, she paused, drew a short breath, her whole frame seemed disturbed, she threw her fine eyes upwards, and exclaimed "*vanished!*" with a wild force which showed that the whole force of the temptation had struck into her soul. The "Hail, king that shall be!" was the winding-up of the spell. It was pronounced with the grandeur of one already by anticipation a queen.

Her solitary summons to her distant lord followed; the murder scene was the next triumph: her acting was that of a triumphant fiend. I must follow those recollections no further.

But her sleep-walking scene! When shall we see its "second or its similar"? Nothing so mystic, nothing so awful, was ever seen upon the stage. Yet, if it had a fault —it was too awful. She more resembled a majestic shade rising from the tomb than a living woman, however disturbed by wild fear and lofty passion. It is a remarkable instance of the genius of Shakspeare, that he here found the means of giving a human interest to a being whom he had almost exalted to the "bad eminence" of a magnificent fiend. In this famous soliloquy, the thoughts which once filled and fired the wife of Macbeth have totally vanished. Ambition has died; remorse lives in its place. The diadem has disappeared; she thinks only of the blood that stains her for ever. She is the queen no more, but an exhausted and unhappy woman, worn down by the agonies of conscience, and with her frame dying by the disease of her soul.

I have seen all the great tragedians of our time, but I have never seen an equal to this extraordinary actress. I have seen beauty, youth, touching sensibility, and powerful conception; but I never saw so complete a union of them all—and that union was the sublime. Shakspeare must have had some such form before his "mind's eye" while he was creating the wife of Macbeth,—some magnificent and regal countenance, some embodying of native majesty, some imaginary Siddons. He could not have gone beyond the true. She was a living Melpomene!

CHAPTER IV.

THE business of the War-office was not transacted in those days with the despatch subsequently introduced by the honest Duke of York. After a delay of weeks, I found myself still ungazetted, grew sad, angry, impatient; and, after some consideration on the various modes of getting rid of *ennui* which were to be found in enlisting in the

service of that great company which extended its wings from Bombay to Bengal, I wrote a full and true statement of my vexations to my lordly brother.

His answer was lordly enough. He had been "so much occupied with the numberless duties devolving upon him as landlord, magistrate, lord-lieutenant, 'and fifty other things,' that he absolutely had not been able to find a moment to think of me;" and, what was rather more perplexing to my immediate sensibilities, "he had not been able to send me a shilling. However, he did all that he could in giving me a note to a particular friend, Mr. Elisha Mordecai, of Moorfields."

I make no attempt to describe the navigation through which I reached him; it was winding and dark beyond all description, and gave me the idea of the passages of a dungeon, or perhaps more completely of a Cornish mine, than of the ways of a great city. And in a hovel worthy to finish such a voyage of discovery, I discovered Mr. Elisha Mordecai, the man of untold opulence. For a while, on being ushered into the office where he sat, pen in hand, I was utterly unable to ascertain anything of him, beyond a gaunt, thin outline, which sat crouching behind a pile of papers, and beneath a small window covered with the dust of ages. In his dungeon he gave me the impression of one of those toads which are found from time to time in blocks of coal, and have lain there, unbreathing and unmoving, since the deluge. However, he was a man of business, and so was I, for the moment. I handed him my brother's note. Out of the bookcase he took down a folio, examined it, compared the writing of my credentials with the signatures of a ledger, which, as Cromwell's son said of his trunk, contained the lives and fortunes, or at least that on which depended the lives and fortunes, of half the noble *roués* of England, their "promises to pay," bonds, mortgages, and post-obits; and then performed the usual operation on myself. My £2500 in prospect was mulcted of a tenth for the trouble of realizing it; of another tenth for prompt payment; and of another for expediting the affair of my commission. "A second such victory would have ruined me."

However, I bore the torture well. At that time I had

so little regard for any object but the grand one of wearing a sword and epaulette, that, if Mordecai had demanded the whole sum, in tenths, I should have scarcely winced.

"Money, Mr. Marston," said my hook-nosed and keen-eyed enlightener, "is the true business of man. It is philosophy, science, and patriotism in one, or, at least, without it the whole three are but of little service. Your philosopher dies in a garret, your man of science hawks telescopes, and your patriot gets himself hanged in honour of the 'rights of man.' I have known all those things, for I was born a German, and bred amongst the illustrissimi of a German university. But I determined not to live a beggar, or at least not to die one. I left Gottingen behind me on a summer morning, and trudged, fought, and 'borrowed' my way to London. What I am now, you see."

Probably, the glance which I involuntarily gave round the room did not exhibit much admiration.

"Ha!" said he, with a half smile, which, on his gigantic and sullen features, looked like a smile on one of the sculptures of a mausoleum, "you judge by appearances. Let me give you one piece of advice. If the Italian said, 'Distrust words, they are fit only to disguise thoughts,' take a Londoner's warning, and distrust eyes—they are fit only to pretend to see." I laughed, and said something of Machiavelli. A sneer rippled over his stern visage; and he honoured me for the adroitness of my imagination. "I must see more of you, Mr. Marston," said he, "and you will probably not think me quite the wolf that I seem in this den." He paused a moment, and turned over some memorandums. "I find," said he, "by these papers, that I shall have occasion to leave town in the beginning of next week; you shall then see how I live. It is not through want of a liking for light and air that I hut here. I am a German. I have seen plains and mountains in my time. If I had been a fool there, I should have remained a boar-hunter; if I were a fool here, I should act like others of the breed, and be a fox-hunter. But I had other game in view; and now I could sell many a noble estate, have many an 'honourable' at my levee, break up an old loan, buy up a new one, and shake the credit of anything but, perhaps, the Bank of England."

This was bold speaking, and at another time I should have doubted it; but the times were bold, the language of the streets was bold, the country was bold, and I too was bold. There was also something singular in the speaker; even the hovel round him had a look which added to his influence. We ate and drank together—a new source of cordiality. Our conversation continued long, and it ended in my acceptance of his invitation to his villa at Brighton, which he termed "a small thing, simply for a week's change of air," and where he promised to give me some curious explanations of his theory, "that money was the master of all things,—men, manners, and opinions."

On one of the finest mornings of autumn, in fulfilment of my promise to the Jew, I mounted the box of the "Royal Sussex Stage."

On the roof of the coach I found a strong-featured and closely wrapped-up man, who, by degrees, performed the part of my cicerone.

My new acquaintance exhibited as perfect a knowledge of the country residents as of its map; and nothing could be more unhesitating than his opinions of them all, from the prince "and his set," as he termed them, to Mordecai himself. Of my Jew friend he said, with a laugh, "There is not a better friend to the King's Bench in all England. If you have anything to lose, he will strip you on the spot. If you have nothing you may escape, unless he can make something by having you hanged." I begged of him to spare my new friend. "Why," said he, "he is one of my oldest friends, and one of the cleverest fellows alive. I speak tenderly of him, from admiration of his talents. I have a liking for the perfection of a screw. He is a superb fellow. You will find his 'Hermitage,' as he calls it, a pond of gold fish. But all this you will soon learn for yourself." The coach now stopped on a rising ground, which showed the little fishing village of Brighton beneath us, basking in the glow of sunset. My cicerone got down, and bade me farewell. On inquiring his name from my fellow-travellers, a group of Sussex farmers, I found a general disinclination to touch on the subject. Even the coachman, the established source of information on all topics, exhibited no wish to discuss the stranger; his official loquacity was almost dumb.

No country in Europe has changed its appearance more strikingly than the greater part of England during the last fifty years. Sussex was then as wild as the wildest heath of Yorkshire. The population, too, looked as wild as the landscape. This was once the very land of the bold smuggler; the haunt of the dashing defier of the custom-house officer; the element of the amphibious animal, to whom storms were native, and ankers of right Nantz a provision of nature.

We passed groups of men who, though they had not the sailor's dress, had the sailor's look.

On our passing one group, leaning with their backs against one of the low walls which seemed the only enclosure of this rugged region, I, half in earnest, half laughingly, hinted to one of my neighbours, a giant of a rough-headed farmer, that "perhaps a meeting with such a party, at a later hour, might be inconvenient, especially if the traveller had a full purse." The fellow turned on me a countenance of ridicule.

"Are they smugglers?" I asked, with a boyish want of tact.

"Why, no," was the answer with a leer. "We have nothing of that breed among us; we are all honest men."

It was evidently not the "etiquette" on the roof of the Royal Sussex to talk much on the subject; and, before my curiosity could reach the length of actual imprudence, the coachman pulled up, and informed me that I had reached the nearest turn to "the Hermitage." My valise was lowered down, a peasant was found to carry it, and I plunged into the depth of a defile as primitive as if it had been a path in Siberia.

It was brief, however, and in a few minutes I was within sight of the villa. Here I at once discovered that Mordecai was a man of taste; perhaps the very roughness of the Sussex jungle, through which I had just passed, had been suffered to remain for the sake of contrast. A small lodge, covered with late-blooming roses, let me into a narrow avenue of all kinds of odorous shrubs. As I stood, leaning against a tree, and baring my hot brain and bosom to the breeze, that rose with delicious coolness, I heard music. It was a sweet voice, accompanied at intervals by some

skilful touches of a harp; and, from the solemnity of the measure, I supposed it to be a hymn. But who was the minstrel? Mordecai had never mentioned to me either wife or daughter. But, at all events, the song was sweet. The minstrel was evidently a woman, and the Jew's household promised me more amusement than I could have expected from the man of Moorfields. The song ceased, the charm was broken, and I moved on.

My entertainer received me with more civility than I had expected. He was almost fashionably dressed; his grim features were smoothed into an elaborate smile; and he repeated his gratification at seeing me, in such variety of tones that I began to doubt the cordiality of my reception. I could have no doubt of the elegance of the apartment into which I was shown. All was foreign, even to the flowers in the vases that filled the windows.

Naturally making him some acknowledgments for his invitation, and saying some civil thing of his taste, he laughed, and replied, "*I* have but little merit in the matter. All this is my daughter's. Moorfields is *my* house; this is Mariamne's house. As our origin and connections are foreign, we make use of our opportunities to indulge ourselves in these foreign trifles. But we have a little '*réunion*' of our neighbours this evening, and I must first make you known to the lady of the *fête*." He rang the bell, and a servant announced that his mistress would attend us in a few minutes. I remained, examining the pictures and the prospect, when a lively voice, and the opening of a door, made me turn round to pay my homage to the lady. I saw one of the gayest faces and lightest figures imaginable; the *petit nez retroussé*, and altogether much more the air of a pretty Parisian than one of the superb race of Zion. Her manner was as animated as her eyes, as she entered into conversation; and in a few minutes we laughed and talked together as if we had been acquaintances from our cradles.

Her history of the house was simply that "she hated town and loved the country; that she loved the sea better than the land; and loved society of her own selection better than society forced upon her. On the sea-shore she found all that she liked, and escaped all that she disliked;

and she therefore lived on the sea-shore. She had persuaded her father to build that house, and they had furnished it according to their own recollections, and even their own whims."

In this sportive way she ran on, while we drank our coffee out of Saxon porcelain which would have shone on the table of a crowned head.

The windows were thrown open, and we sat enjoying the noblest of all scenes, a glorious sunset. The fragrance of the garden stole in, a "steam of rich, distilled perfumes;" the song of the birds was heard, in those faint and interrupted notes which come with such sweetness in the parting day; the distant hum of the village, and the low sound of the distant waves subsiding on the beach, made a harmony of their own, perhaps more soothing and subduing than the most refined touches of human skill.

We soon after had the moon herself, rising broad and bright from the ocean; and all was romance, until a party were seen coming up the avenue, laughing and talking very sportively.

"I beg a thousand apologies; but I had forgotten to mention that we have a small party this evening, chiefly foreign; and, as you perceive, our friends keep early hours," said the Jessica, rising to receive them.

"They are French, and emigrants," added Mordecai gravely. "All is over with them and theirs in France, and they have made the best of their way to England; therein acting more wisely than those who have stayed behind. They have slipped out of the claws of the '*tigre-singe*,' as their countryman described them."

I certainly was not prepared for the names which I now heard successively announced. Instead of the moderate condition from which I had supposed Mordecai and his pretty daughter, aspiring as she was, to have chosen their society, I found myself in a circle of names of which the world had been talking since I was in my cradle, if not for a dozen centuries before. I was in the midst of dukes, counts, and chevaliers, maréchals and marchionesses.

The scene was perfectly new to me, and I was delighted with its novelty.

All that I had seen of the peerage of our haughty

country was dim and formal to the gay glitter of the crowd round me. Nature never moulded two national characters so distinct in all points; but the French exterior carries all before it. Diamonds and decorations sparkled on every side. The dresses of the women were as fashionable as if they had never known fear or flight; and the conversation was as light, sportive, and *badinant*, as if they were all waiting in the *Œil de Bœuf* of Versailles till the chamberlain of Marie Antoinette should signify the royal pleasure to receive them.

I was amused, but I was still more deeply interested; for the chief topics of the evening were those on which public curiosity was most anxiously alive at the moment—the hazards of the revolutionary tempest which they had left raging on the opposite shore.

We had scarcely sat down to the supper which Mordecai's hospitality and his daughter's taste had provided for us—and a most costly display of plate and pine-apples it was—when our entertainer was called out of the room by a new arrival. After some delay he returned, bringing with him a middle-aged officer, a fine, soldierly-looking figure, in the uniform of the royal guard. The officer had just arrived from France, with letters for some of the party, and with an introduction to the Jew, whom I now began to regard as an agent of the French princes. The officer was known to the whole table; and the inquiries for the fate of their friends and France were incessant and innumerable.

"Living," said Mordecai, "at this distance from the place of events which succeed each other with such rapidity, we can scarcely judge of anything. But, if the king would rely more on his peasantry and less on his populace, and more on his army than either, he might remain king of France still."

"True!—true!" was the general acclamation.

"He should have clung to his noblesse, like Henri Quatre," said a duke.

"He should have made common cause with his clergy," said a prelate, with the physiognomy of one of Titian's cardinals.

"Anything but the Tiers Etat," was uttered by all, with a general voice of horror.

"My letters of this evening," said Mordecai, "tell me that the *fête* at Versailles has had dangerous consequences."

"*Ciel!*" exclaimed a remarkably handsome woman of middle age, with the "air noble" in every feature. "Pardon me, it must be an error. I was present. It was the most brilliant of all possible *réunions*. It was a pledge to the salvation of France. I have the sound of 'Richard, O mon Roi!' in my ears at this moment."

The name was electric. All began that delicious air at the moment. Sobs and sighs stole in between the pauses of the harmony. Their rich and practised voices gave it the sweetness and solemnity of a hymn. Fine eyes were lifted to heaven; fine faces were buried in their clasped hands; and the whole finished like the closing of a prayer.

But madame la duchesse was full of her subject, and we were full of curiosity. Mariamne implored her to give us some idea of a scene of which all Europe was thinking and talking.

"For weeks," said she, "we had been tortured at Versailles with reports from the capital. We lived in a perpetual fever. The fury of the populace was terrible. The wretches who inflamed it, constantly threatened to lead the armed multitude to the palace. We were almost without defence.

"It was my month of waiting, as lady of honour. I found the queen always firm; or, if she ever trembled, it was at the want of firmness in others. She often said to me, in those revolutionary nights, when we sat listening for the sound of the cannon or the tocsin from Paris, 'France is an abyss in which the throne must sink. But sovereigns may be undone, they must not be disgraced.' The world never possessed a more royal mind.

"At length an opportunity seemed to offer of showing the true feeling of the court to the army. The regiment of Flanders had come to take its tour of service at the palace, and the *garde du corps* had sent them an invitation to a grand military banquet. There was nothing new, and could have been nothing suspicious, in the invitation; for it was the custom of the *garde*, on the arrival of any regi-

ment at Versailles, to entertain them as a commencement of mutual civility."

Every eye was now fixed on the narrator, as she went on with increasing animation.

"Never was there a day of greater anxiety. We were sure of the *garde du corps;* but treachery was roving through France, and the banquet might only produce a collision. The entertainment, by being in the opera salon, was actually within the palace; and all the royal suite remained in the royal apartments in fear and trembling during the entire day.

"But, as the night advanced, the intelligence which was brought to us every five minutes from the salon became more tranquillizing. The coldness which had existed in the beginning between the *garde* and the troops of the line had vanished, and loyal healths, gay speeches, and charming songs succeeded. At length a gallant young lieutenant of the *garde*, in a fit of noble enthusiasm, cried, 'We are all soldiers of France; we are all loyal, all happy! Why shall not our king witness our loyalty and our happiness?' The tidings were instantly conveyed to the royal apartments. The king rose; the court followed. We entered the salon. Oh, that sight!—so new, so touching, so indescribable!"

Her voice sank for a moment; but her ardent countenance spoke. We waited in silence. She recovered herself and proceeded—

"The queen leaned on the arm of the king; the dauphin and dauphiness followed. Madame Elizabeth—that saint on earth, if ever there was one—headed the ladies of the court. All rose on our entrance. We were received with one acclamation. Alas! alas! was it to be the last beat of the national heart? Alas! alas! was it to be the last flash of the splendour of France—the dazzling illumination of the *catafalque* of the Bourbons—the bright burst of flame from the funeral pile of the monarchy?"

Her voice sank into silence. At length, to relieve the pause, Mordecai expressed something of a hope that the royal family slept in peace, for that one night at least.

"I really cannot tell," briskly resumed the noble narrator. "But I know that the ladies of the court did not. As the

king retired, and we remained in the opera boxes to amuse ourselves a little with the display, we heard, to our astonishment, a proposal that the tables should be cleared away, and the ladies invited to a dance upon the spot. The proposal was instantly followed by the officers climbing into the boxes, and by our tearing up our pocket-handkerchiefs to make them cockades. We descended, and danced loyally till daybreak."

"But—your news, monsieur le captaine?" was the demand all round the table.

"I almost dread to allude to it," said the captain, "as it may seem to contradict the opinion of madame la duchesse; yet I am afraid that we shall have to regret this *fête* as one of the most disastrous events to the king." He stopped. But the interest of the time overcame all other considerations.

"The banquet of the 1st of October," said he, "had delighted us all; but its consequences, which, I quite agree with madame, ought to have restored peace, were fatal. It lulled Versailles into a false security, at the moment when it roused Paris into open rebellion. The leaders of the populace, dreading the return of the national attachment to our good king, resolved to strike a blow which should shake the monarchy. Happening to be sent to Paris on duty the next day, I was astonished to find everything in agitation. The workmen all in the streets; the orators of the Palais Royal all on their benches, declaiming in the most furious manner; crowds of women rushing along the Boulevards, singing their barbarous revolutionary songs; some even brandishing knives and carrying pikes, and all frantic against the *fête*. As I passed down the Rue St. Honoré, I stopped to listen to the harangue of a half-naked ruffian, who had made a rostrum of the shoulders of two of the porters of the Halle, and, from this moving tribune, harangued the multitude as he went along. Every falsehood, calumny, and abomination that could come from the lips of man, were poured out by the wretch before me. The sounds of 'Vive Marat!' told me his name. I afterwards heard that he lived on the profits of a low journal, in a cellar, with a gang of wretches constantly drunk, and thus was only the fitter for the rabble. He told them that there was a con-

spiracy on foot to massacre the patriots of Paris; that the troops from the provinces were coming, by order of the king, to put man, woman, and child to the sword; that the *fête* at Versailles was given to the vanguard of the army, only to pledge them to this terrible purpose; that the governors of the provinces were all in the league of blood; and that the bakers of Paris had received an order from Versailles to put poison in all their loaves within the next twenty-four hours. 'Frenchmen,' exclaimed this livid villain, tearing his hair, and howling with the wildness of a demoniac, 'do you love your wives and children? Will you suffer them to die in agonies before your eyes? Pause, and you are massacred. Arm, and you are invincible.' He was answered by shouts of vengeance.

"I remained that night at the head-quarters of the staff of Paris, the Hôtel de Ville. I was awakened before day-break by the sound of a drum, and, on opening my eyes, was startled by lights flashing across the ceiling of the room where I slept. Shots followed, and it was evident there was a conflict in the streets. This continued till daylight, when we at last got sight of our enemy. Never was there a more tremendous view. Every avenue to the Place de Grève seemed pouring in its thousands and tens of thousands. Pikes, bayonets on poles, and rusty muskets, filled the eye as far as it could reach. Flags, with all kinds of atrocious inscriptions against the king and queen, were waving in the blast; drums, horns, and every uncouth noise of the raging million, filled the air. And in front of this innumerable mass pressed on a column of desperadoes, headed by a woman, or a man disguised as a woman, beating a drum, and crying out, in the intervals of every roar, 'Bread, bread!'

"To resist was evidently hopeless, or only to provoke massacre; but I had already despatched an express to the officer in command at the Tuileries, to come and save the arms and ammunition deposited at the Hôtel de Ville; and we expected the reinforcement from minute to minute. While my eyes turned, in this moment of life and death, towards the quarter from whence the troops were to come, a sudden shout from the multitude made me look round; a fellow, perhaps one of the *funambules* of the faubourg

theatres, was climbing up to the belfry by a rope, with the agility of a monkey. His purpose was seen by us at once, and seen with fresh alarm; for, if he had been able to reach the great bell, the terrible 'tocsin' would have aroused the country for ten leagues round, and have poured a hundred thousand armed peasantry into Paris. I pointed him out to the guard, and they fired a volley at him as he swung above their heads. They missed him, the populace shouted, and the fellow, taking off his cap and waving it in triumph, still climbed on. I next fired both my pistols at him; which was the luckier of the two I cannot tell, but I saw him stagger, just as he planted his foot on the battlement; he was evidently hit, and a general yell from the multitude told that they saw it too; he made a convulsive spring to secure himself, fell back, lost his hold, and plunged headlong from a height of a hundred and fifty feet to the ground! Another tried the same adventure, and with the same fate; three in succession were shot; but enthusiasm or madness gave them courage, and at length half a dozen making the attempt together, the belfry was reached, and the tocsin was rung. Its effect *was* terrible. The multitude seemed to be inspired with a new frenzy of rage as they heard its clang. Every bell in Paris soon began to clang in succession. The din was deafening; the populace seemed to become more daring and desperate every moment; all was uproar. I could soon see the effect of the tocsin, in the new crowds which recruited our assailants from all sides. Their fire became heavier; still, in the spirit of men fighting for their lives, we kept them at bay, till the last cartridge was in our muskets. But, when all was despair, we saw the distant approach of the reinforcement from the Tuileries, and breathed for an instant. Yet judge of our astonishment when it had no sooner entered the crowd than, instead of driving the wretches before them, we saw the soldiers scatter, mix, and actually fraternize with the *canaille;* a general scene of embracing and huzzaing followed, the shakos were placed on the heads of the rabble, the hats and caps of the rabble were hoisted on the soldiers' bayonets; and, to our horror alike at their treachery and our inevitable destruction, the troops wearing the king's uniform pushed forward, heading the column

of insurrection, We fired our last volley, and all was over. The multitude burst into the hotel like a torrent. All our party were either killed or wounded. For the last half-hour we had not a hundred men able to pull a trigger, against a fire which poured from the streets, from the windows, and from the house-tops, on every side of the square. That any one of us escaped from the showers of bullets was a miracle."

CHAPTER V.

I CAN offer but an imperfect transcript of the brave guardsman's narrative, seconded as it was by an intelligent countenance, and that national vividness of voice and gesture which often tell so much more than words. But to describe its effect on his auditory is impossible. Every countenance was riveted on him, every change of those extraordinary scenes was marked by a new expression of every face round the table.

There was still much to tell; the fate of the royal family was the general question; and the remainder of the melancholy tale was given with calmer sensibility.

"When I recovered my senses, it was late in the day; and I found myself in an humble room, with only an old woman for my attendant, but with my wounds bandaged, and every appearance of my having fallen into friendly hands. The conjecture was true. I was in the house of one of my father's *gardes de chasse*, who, having commenced tavern-keeper in the Faubourg St. Antoine some years back, and being a thriving man, had become a 'personnage' in his section, and was now a captain of the Fédérés. Forced, *malgré*, to join the march to the Hôtel de Ville, he had seen me in the *mêlée*, and dragged me from under a heap of killed and wounded. To his recollection I probably owed my life; for the patriots mingled plunder with their principles, stripped all the fallen, and the pike and dagger finished the career of many of the wounded. Lying on my bed, I learned that the attack on the Hôtel de Ville was only a part of the scheme of operation; that an insurrection was organized throughout France; that the king was to be

deposed, and a 'lieutenant of the kingdom' appointed, until the sovereign people had declared their will; and that the first movement was to be a march of all the Parisian sections to Versailles. I should have started from my pillow, to spring, sabre in hand, upon the traitors; but I was held down by my wounds, and perhaps still more by the entreaties of my old attendant, who protested against my stirring, as it would be instantly 'followed by her murder and that of every inmate of the house.' The club now proceeded to enjoy themselves after the labours of the day. They had a republican carouse, and their revels were horrible. They soon became intoxicated, sang, danced, embraced, fought, and were reconciled again. Then came the harangues, each orator exceeding his predecessor in blasphemy, till all was execration, cries of vengeance against kings and priests, and roars of massacre. I heard the names of men long suspected, but of whom they now spoke openly, as the leaders of the national movement, and of others marked for assassination. They drank toasts to 'Death,' to Queen Poissarde, and to 'Goddess Guillotine.' It was a pandemonium.

"A drum at length beat the 'alarme' in the streets the orgy was at an end, and amid a crash of bottles and glasses, they staggered, as well as their feet could carry them, out of the house. When the sound had died away in the distance, my humble friend entered my room, thanking his stars that 'he had contrived to escape the march.'

"'Where are they gone?' I asked.

"'To Versailles,' was his shuddering answer.

"Nothing could now detain me. After some helpless efforts to rise from my bed, and an hour or two of almost despair, I succeeded in getting on my feet and procuring a horse. Versailles was now my only object, and, disguised as a courier, I set out by a cross-road, in hope to arrive before the multitude.

"But I had not gone above a league when I fell in with a scattered platoon of the mob, who were rambling along as if on a party of pleasure; tossing their pikes and clashing their sabres to all kinds of revolutionary songs. I was instantly seized, as a 'courier of the aristocrats.' Their sagacity, once at work, found out a hundred names for

me:—I was an 'agent of the Austrians,' a 'disguised priest,' an 'emigrant noble;' my protestations were in vain, and they held a court-martial, on me and my horse, on the road, and ordered me to deliver up my despatches on pain of being piked on the spot. But I could give up none, for the best of all possible reasons. In this dilemma, my good genius interposed, in the shape of an enormous *poissarde*, who, rushing through the crowd, threw her huge arms round me, called me her *cher Jaques*, poured out a volley of professional eloquence on the shrinking heroes, and proclaimed me 'her son returning from the army!' All now was sentiment. The *poissarde* was probably in earnest, for her faculties were nearly in the same condition with those of her fellow-patriots. I was honoured with a general embrace, and shared the privilege of the travelling bottle. As the night was now falling, an orator proposed that 'the overthrow of the monarchy should be deferred until the next day.' A Fédéré uniform was provided for me; I was hailed as a brother; we pitched a tent, lighted fires, cooked a supper, and bivouacked for the night.

"In ten minutes the whole party were asleep. I rose, stole away, left my newly-found mother to lament her lost son again, and with a heavy heart took the road to Versailles. The night had changed to a sudden tempest, and the sky had grown dark as death. It was a night for the fall of a dynasty. But there was a lurid blaze in the distant horizon, and from time to time a shout, or a sound of musketry, which told me only too well where Versailles lay. I felt that the attack must be commencing at the moment; the blaze that I saw might be the conflagration of the palace; the firing might be the battle over the bodies of the royal family.

"The church clocks were striking three in the morning when I arrived at Versailles, after the most exhausting journey that I had ever made. But there, what a scene met my eye! It was beyond all that I had ever imagined of rabble ferocity or rabble triumph. Though it was still night, the multitude thronged the streets; the windows were all lighted up, huge fires were blazing in all directions, torches were carried about at the head of every troop of the ban-

ditti; it was the bivouac of a hundred thousand bedlamites. It was now that I owned the lucky chance which had made me a Fédéré. In any other dress I should have been a suspicious person, and have probably been put to death; but, in the brown coat, sabre, and red cap of the Sectionnaire, I was fraternized with in all quarters. The night was rainy, and gusts of wind tore everything before them; yet the armed populace remained carousing in the streets—all was shouting, oaths, and execrations against the royal family. Some groups were feasting on the plunder of the houses of entertainment, others were dancing and roaring the 'Carmagnole.' One party had broken into the theatre, and dressed themselves in the spoils of the wardrobe; others were drilling, and exhibiting their skill by firing at the king's arms hung over the shops of the *restaurateurs*. Those shops were crowded with hundreds, eating and drinking at free cost. All the *cafés* and gaming-houses were lighted from top to bottom. Versailles looked alternately like a vast masquerade, like an encampment of savages, and like a city taken by storm.

"As, wearied to death, I threw myself down to rest on the steps of one of the churches, a procession of patriots happened to fix its quarters on the spot, its leader, a grotesque-looking fellow, dressed in a priest's vestments. 'Brave Frenchmen,' exclaimed the mummer, 'the eyes of the world are fixed upon you; and this night you have done what the world has never rivalled—you have shaken the throne of the tyrant. What cared you for the satellites of the Bourbon? You scorned their bayonets; you laughed at their bullets. Nothing can resist the energy of Frenchmen.' This flourish was, of course, received with a roar. The orator now produced a scarf which he had wrapped round his waist, and waved it in the light before them. 'Look here, citizen soldiers,' he cried; 'brave Fédérés, see this gore. It is the blood of the monsters who would extinguish the liberty of France. Yesterday I headed a battalion of our heroes in the attack of the palace. A slave of the tyrant Capet rushed on me, sword in hand; I sent a bullet through his heart, and, as he fell, I tore this scarf from his body. See the marks of his blood.' It may be conceived with what feelings I heard this narrative

The palace had been sacked, the queen insulted, my friends and comrades murdered. I gave an involuntary groan; his fierce eye fell upon me as I endeavoured to escape from this horrible neighbourhood, and he ordered me to approach him. The fifty pikes which were brandished at his word, made obedience necessary. The crowd roared for my death. But he whispered, 'I know you well; you are at my mercy; I have often played the barrel-organ outside the walls of your *corps de garde;* you are acquainted with the secret ways of the palace, and you must lead us in, or die upon the spot.' He probably took my astonishment and silence for acquiescence; for he thrust a musket into my hand. 'This night,' said he aloud, 'will settle everything. The whole race of the Bourbons are doomed. The fry may have escaped, but we have netted all the great fish. We have friends, too, in high quarters;' and he shook a purse of louis d'ors at my ear. 'We are to storm the palace an hour before daybreak; the troops must either join us, or be put to death; the king and his tribe will be sent to a dungeon; and France, before to-morrow night, will have at her head, if not the greatest man, the richest fool in Europe.' He burst out into an irrestrainable laugh, in which the whole party joined.

"My situation had grown more trying at every moment, but escape was still impossible, and my next thought was to make the best of my misfortune, by entering the palace along with the crowd, and, when once there, dying by the side of my old comrades. I had, however, expected a sanguinary struggle. What was my astonishment when I saw the massive gates, which might have been so easily defended, broken open at once—a few random shots the only resistance, and the staircases and ante-rooms in possession of the multitude within a quarter of an hour! 'Where is La Fayette?' in wrath and indignation, I cried to one of the wounded *garde du corps*, whom I had snatched from among the knives of my *sans-culotte* companions. 'Asleep,' answered the dying man, with a bitter smile. 'Where are the National Guard whom he brought with him last night from Paris?' I asked, in wonder. 'Asleep, too,' was the contemptuous answer. I rushed on, and at length reached my friends, tore off my Fédéré

uniform, and used, with what strength was left me, my bayonet, until it was broken.

"I shall say no more of that night of horrors.

"At morning, the rabble leaders insisted that the king should return with them to Paris. Monsieur La Fayette was now awake, and he gave it as his opinion that this was the only mode of pleasing the populace. When a king submits to popular will, he is disgraced; and a disgraced king is undone. It was now broad day; the contest was over; the royal carriages were ordered; and the *garde du corps* were drawn up to follow them. At this moment, the barrel-organ man, my leader of the night, passed me by with a grimace, and whispered, 'Brother Fédéré, did I not tell you how it would be? The play is only beginning; the farce came first, we have not finished yet. *Bonjour!*' He laughed, and disappeared among the crowd.

"There was one misery to come, and worst of all—the procession to Paris. Round the carriage of the king, thousands of the refuse of Paris, men and women, railed and revelled, sang and shouted, the most furious insults on their majesties. And in front of this mass were carried on pikes, as standards, the heads of two of our corps, who had fallen fighting at the door of the queen's chamber. Loaves, borne on pikes, and dipped in blood, formed others of their standards. Huge placards, with the words, 'Down with the tyrant! Down with the priests! Down with the nobles!' waved above the heads of the multitude. 'Make way for the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice,' was shouted, with every addition of obloquy and insolence; and, in this agony, we were forced to drag on our weary steps till midnight. One abomination more was to signalize the horrible spirit of the time. Within a league of Paris, the royal equipages were ordered to halt; and for what purpose? It was, that the bleeding heads of our unfortunate comrades might be dressed and powdered by the village barber—to render them fit to enter Paris.

"We entered the city by torchlight, amid the firing of cannon; the streets were all illuminated, and the multitude poured on, maddened with brandy. Yet the scene was unlike that of the night before. There was something in the extravagances of Versailles wholly different from the

sullen and frowning aspect of Paris. The one had the look of a melodrama; the other the look of an execution. All here was funereal. We marched with the king to the Place du Carrousel, and when the gates of the palace closed on him, I felt as if they were the gates of the tomb. Perhaps it would be best that they were; that the king should never suffer such another day; that the man should never look on the face of man again. He had drained the cup of agony; he had tasted all the bitterness of death."

The story left us all melancholy for a while; bright eyes again overflowed, as well they might, and stately bosoms heaved with irresistible emotion. Yet, after all, the night was wound up with a general cotillon, danced with as much grace, and as much gaiety too, as if it had been in the Salle d'Opéra.

CHAPTER VI.

I ROSE early next morning, and felt the spirit-stirring power of the sea-breeze. In those days, Brighton covered but the borders of the shore. It was scarcely more than a little line of fishermen's cottages, fenced against the surge by the remaining timbers of boats which had long seen their last adventure. It was a brisk, bright morning, and the waves were curling before a lively breeze, the sun was glowing, and clusters of vessels floating down the Channel spread their sails like masses of summer cloud in the sunshine. It was my first sight of the ocean, and that sight is always a new idea.

What power, what depth, what expanse, lay before my eyes! How singular, too, that while the grandeur of the land arises from bold irregularity and incessant change of aspect, from the endless variety of forest, vale, and mountain, the same effect should be produced in the ocean by the absence of all irregularity and all change!

As I sat gazing on the bright and beautiful expanse before me, I was aroused by a step on the shingle. I turned, and saw the gallant guardsman who had so much interested our party on the night before. But he received my salutation with a gravity which instantly put an end to

my good-humour; and I waited for the *dénouement*, at his pleasure. He produced from his pocket a sealed billet, which I opened, and which, on glancing my eye over it, appeared to me a complete rhapsody. I begged of him to read it, and indulge me with an explanation. He read it, and smiled.

"It is, I own, not perfectly intelligible," said he; "but some allowance must be made for a man deeply injured, and inflamed by a sense of wrong."

I read the signature—Lafontaine, *Capitaine des Chasseurs légers*. I had never heard the name before. I begged to know "the nature of his business with me, as it was altogether beyond my conjecture."

"It is perfectly probable, sir," was the reply; "for I understand that you had never seen each other till last night, at the house of your friend. The case is simply this:—Lafontaine, who is one of the finest fellows breathing, has been for some time deeply smitten by the various charms of your host's very pretty daughter, and, so far as I comprehend, the lady has acknowledged his merits. But your arrival here has a good deal deranged the matter. He conceives your attentions to his fair one to be of so marked a nature that it is impossible for him to overlook them."

I laughed, and answered,

"Sir, you may make your friend quite at his ease on the subject, for I have not known the lady's existence till within these twenty-four hours."

"You danced with her half the evening—you sat beside her at supper. She listened to you with evident attention—of this I myself was witness; and the report in the neighbourhood is, that you have come to this place by an express arrangement with her father," gravely retorted the guardsman.

All this exactness of requisition appeared to me to be going much too far; and I exhibited my feeling on the subject, in the tone in which I replied, that I had stated everything that was necessary for the satisfaction of a "man of sense, but that I had neither the faculty nor the inclination to indulge the captiousness of any man."

His colour mounted, and I seemed as if I was likely to have a couple of heroes on my hands. But he compressed

his lip, evidently strangled a chivalric speech, and, after a pause to recover his calmness, said—

"I have not come here to decide punctilios on either side. Can you suggest any means by which this difference may be settled at once?"

"None in the world, sir," was my answer. "I have told you the fact, that I have no pretension whatever to the lady—that I am wholly unacquainted even with the person of your friend—that the idea of intentional injury on my part, therefore, is ridiculous; and let me add, for the benefit of your friend, that to expect an apology for imaginary injuries would be the most ridiculous part of the entire transaction."

"What, then, am I to do?" asked the gallant captain, evidently perplexed. "I really wish that the affair could be got over without *fracas*."

"What you ought to do, sir, is sufficiently plain," said I. "Go to your friend; if he has brains enough remaining to comprehend the nature of the case, he will send you back with his apology. If he has not, I shall remain for half an hour on the sands until he has made up his mind."

The captain made me a low bow, and slowly paced back to the lodging of his fiery compatriot.

When I was left alone, I, for the first time, felt the whole ill-luck of my situation. So long as I was heated by our little dialogue, I thought only of retorting the impertinent interference of a stranger with my motives or actions. But now the whole truth flashed on me with the force of a new faculty. I saw myself involved in a contest with a fool or a lunatic, in which either of our lives, or both, might be sacrificed—and for nothing. Hope, fortune, reputation, perhaps renown, all the prospects of life were opening before me, and I was about to shut the gate with my own hand. In those thoughts I was still too young for what is called personal peril to intervene. The graver precaution of more advanced years was entirely out of the question. I was a soldier, or about to be one; and I should have rejoiced, if the opportunity had been given to me, in heading a forlorn hope, or doing any other of those showy things which make a name. But the war was beginning—my future regiment was ordered for foreign service—every

heart in England was beating with hope or fear—every eye of Europe was fixed upon England and Englishmen; and, in the midst of all this national excitement, to fall in a pitiful private quarrel struck me with a sudden sense of self-contempt and wilful absurdity, that made me almost loathe my being.

The captain returned. I had not stirred from the spot.

"I regret," said he, "that my friend is wholly intractable. He has convinced himself, if he can convince no one else, that he has lost the good opinion of his fair one, and that you are the cause. Some communications which he had from London informed him of your frequent intercourse with her father. This rendered him suspicious, and the peculiar attention with which you were treated last night produced a demand on the lady for an explanation, which, of course, heightened the quarrel. He now requires your formal abandonment of the pursuit."

All my former feelings of offence recurred at the words, and I hotly asked—"Well, sir, to whom must I kneel—to the lady or the gentleman? Take my answer back—that I shall do neither. Where is your friend to be found?"

He pointed to a clump of trees within a few hundred yards, and I followed him. I there saw my antagonist, a tall and handsome young man, but with a countenance of such dejection that he might have sat for the picture of despair. It was clear that his case was one for which there was no tonic but what the wits of the day called "a course of steel." Beside him stood a grey-haired old figure, of a remarkably intelligent countenance, though stooped slightly with age. He was introduced to me as General Deschamps; and, in a few well-expressed words, he mentioned that he attended, from respect to the British, to offer his services to me on an occasion "which he deeply regretted, but which circumstances unfortunately rendered necessary, and which all parties were, doubtless, anxious to conclude before it should produce any irritation in the neighbourhood."

To the offer of choice of weapons, I returned an answer of perfect indifference. It had happened that as my father had destined me for diplomacy, and had conceived the science to have but two essentials, French and fencing,

I was tolerably expert in both. Swords were chosen. We were placed on the ground, and the conflict began. My antagonist was evidently a master of his art; but there is no weapon whose use depends so much upon the mind at the moment as the sword. He was evidently resolved to kill or be killed; and the desperation with which he rushed on me exposed him to my very inferior skill. At the third pass I ran him through the sword-arm. He staggered back with the twinge; but, at the instant when he was about to bound on me, and perhaps take his revenge, a scream stopped us all; a female wrapped in cloak and veil rushed forward, and threw herself into Lafontaine's arms, in a passion of tears. An attendant, who soon came up, explained the circumstance, and it finally turned out that the fair Mariamne, whatever her coquetry might have intended at night, repented at morn. She had come just in time.

The reconciliation was complete. I was now not only forgiven by the lover, but was the "very best friend he had in the world;—a man of honour, a paragon, a *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*." The wound of the gallant chasseur was bound up, like an ancient knight's, with his mistress's scarf. Her little heart poured out its full abundance in her voluble tongue; and for a quarter of an hour, and it is a long life for happiness, we were the happiest half-dozen in Christendom.

How Mordecai would admire all this, was yet to be told; but my casual mention of his name broke up the rapture at once. Mariamne suddenly became sensible of the irregularity of alternately fainting and smiling in the arms of a handsome young soldier, and in the presence, too, of so many spectators, all admirers of her black eyes and blooming sensibilities. Mariamne and her attendant were escorted to the edge of the plantation by her restored knight; and I accepted the general's invitation to breakfast instead of drowning myself in the next pond.

The general was lodged in the first floor of a fisherman's dwelling. We entered it through an apartment filled with matters of the fisherman's trade. The walls were covered with engravings of British sea-fights and favourite admirals

from the days of Elizabeth,—patriotic in the highest degree, and most intolerable specimens of the arts.

The general welcomed us to his little domicile with as much grace as if he had been ushering us into the throne-room of the Tuileries. He smiled, talked, and did the honours of his apartment, with as much urbanity as if he had been surrounded by all the glittering furniture, and all the liveried attendance, of his governorship.

Nearly twenty years after this period, I happened to be sitting one day with Gentz, the great practical philosopher of his age and country. Germany was then in the most deplorable depression, overrun with French armies; and Napoleon was at Erfurth, in the pride of that "bad eminence" on which he stood in such Titanic grandeur, and from which he was so soon to be flung with such Titanic ruin. Our conversation naturally turned on the melancholy state of things.

"I think," said the great politician, "that this evil supremacy *must* fall."

To my remark, that her central position, her vast population, the bravery of her troops, and the military propensities of her people, fitted France to be the disturber of Europe,

"Yes," was the sage's answer; "but to be no more than the disturber. Her power is the whirlwind. For purposes which man may never be able fully to define, she is suffered, or sent forth, to sweep the Continent, perhaps, like the tempest, to punish,—nay, perhaps in the end to purify; but the tempest is scarcely more transitory than, or more different from, the dew that invisibly descends and silently refreshes the land."

"But Napoleon," said I, "with an army of half a million, recruited from thirty millions, and with nothing to oppose him but the worn-down force and exhausted treasures of the Continent!"

"True—perfectly true," he replied, throwing back the long locks from a broad forehead, which reminded me of a bust of Plato. "True! Man may be as little able to decide on the means by which the power of France will fall, as on the purposes for which that tremendous fabric of splendid iniquity rose. But look into that street."

It happened that a French regiment of cuirrassies, with the fine clangour of its drums and trumpets, was passing under the window at the moment.

"You see there," said he, "the kind of feeling which that really striking show produces;—not a window is open but our own. The blinds of every balcony have been let down; not an eye looks at these troops."

"They are shrunk from, naturally enough, as conquerors," I observed.

"No—no!" said he, almost in a tone of vexation. "The Germans are as much alive to the merits of their enemies in the field as any other nation in the world. They acknowledge the soldiership of the French. I even believe that the talents of their extraordinary emperor are more sincerely acknowledged in Vienna than in Paris. But it is the contemptuous spirit of the national character that makes its bravery, its gaiety, and even its genius, detested. Trust me, this feeling will not be unfruitful. Out of the hut of the peasant will come the avengers, whom the cabinet has never been able to find in the camp. In this hope alone I live."

I once more asked him, "From what quarter was the restoration to come?"

"I know not—I care not—I ask not," said he, starting from his chair, and traversing the room with huge strides. "The topic tortures me, as if a sword was now forcing its way through my frame. But France will never keep Austria, nor Prussia, nor the Rhenish provinces, nor Holland, nor any spot on earth beyond the soil inhabited by Frenchmen."

"Are the German sovereigns of your opinion?"

"To a man. It is but this morning that I was honoured with a reception by our good emperor. His conviction was complete. Yet you will not see Austria stir a single step until war is the outcry,—not of her court, but of her people."

"You have cheered, and convinced me," said I, as I rose to take my leave. "It certainly has often struck me as singular that France, always mad with the love of possession, has been able to acquire nothing during the last hundred years."

"You will find my theory true," said Gentz. "The individual insolence of her people has been the real impediment to the increase of her dominions."

CHAPTER VII.

THE party to whom I was now introduced, were of a different order from the generality of their country. Originally of the first education and first society in France, the strictness of the military service had produced on them the most valuable effect of years. I found the old general all courtesy, and his friends all good-humour. My conduct in the affair of the morning was after their own hearts; I had, by common consent, earned their good graces; and they gave me on the spot half a dozen invitations to the regiments and chateaus of themselves and their friends, with as much hospitable sincerity as if they had only to recross the Channel to take possession of them again.

"Men of honour," observed the general, "understand each other in all countries. I therefore always think it due, to both Englishmen and Frenchmen, to explain, that we are not here in the light of fugitives; that we have not given up the cause of our country; and that we are on English ground in express obedience to the commands of our sovereign. The plan decided on by the council of officers, of which I was one, was the formation of a camp on the frontier, to which his majesty and the princes should repair, summon the chief authorities of the kingdom, and there provide for the general safety, with a deliberation which was impossible in Paris. It was impeded; it was rejected. In revolutions, the man who is first wins the day.

"At length I was sent off at midnight to take the command of the district of the Loire. I found myself there at the head of ten regiments in the highest order, and, as I thought, of the highest loyalty. I addressed them, and was received with shouts of '*Vive le Roi!*' I gave an addition of pay to the troops, and a banquet to the officers. A note was handed to me, as I took my seat at the head of the table. It simply contained the words, 'You are be-

trayed.' I read it aloud in contempt, and was again answered by shouts of '*Vive le Roi!*' But while we were in the midst of our conviviality, a volley was fired in at the windows, and the streets of Nantz were in uproar—the whole garrison had mutinied! The officers were still loyal; but what was to be done? We rushed out with drawn swords. On our first appearance in the porch of the hotel, a platoon posted in front, evidently for our massacre, levelled by word of command, and fired deliberately into the midst of us. Several were killed on the spot, and many wounded. Some rushed forward, and some retreated into the house. I was among those who forced their way through the crowd, and I made my way to the chateau of the Count de Travancour, but the family were in Paris, and its only inhabitants were servants. I had received a musket-ball in my arm, and was faint with loss of blood. But I had scarcely thrown myself, in weariness and vexation, on a sofa, when a servant rushed into the room with the intelligence that a band of men with torches were approaching the chateau. To defend it with a garrison of screaming women was hopeless; and while I stood considering what to do next, we heard the crash of the gates. The whole circle instantly fell on their knees before me, and implored that I should save their lives and my own by making my escape. A courageous Breton girl undertook to be my guide to the stables, and we set off, under a shower of prayers for our safety. The girl's presence of mind alone saved me; she flew back to the end of the gallery, threw open a small door which led to the roof; and I was suddenly in the open air, with the stars bright above me, and a prodigious extent of the country, including Nantz, with all its illumination and uproar, beneath.

"There never was a finer night for an investigation of the stars, if I had been an astronomer; but the torches which danced up and down through the old and very dingy casements of the mansion, were a matter of much more curious remark to me than if I had discovered a new constellation.

"At length I was chased even out of this spot. But I had here a new adventure. I saw a feeble light gleaming through the roof. An incautious step brought me upon a skylight, and I went through; my fall, however, being

deadened by bursting my way through the canopy of a bed. I had fallen into the hospital of the chateau. An old Beguine was reading her breviary in an adjoining room. She rushed in, with a scream. But those women are so much accustomed to casualties, that I had no sooner acquainted her with the reasons of my flight than she offered to assist my escape. She led me down to the entrance of a subterranean communication between the mansion and the river. The boat which had brought her from the convent was at the mouth of the subterranean; there, the Loire was open.

"But, at the moment when I thought myself most secure, I was in reality in the greatest peril. The Loire had long since broken into the work, and I had descended but a few steps, when I found my feet in water. I went on, however, till it reached my sword-belt. I then thought it time to pause; but just then I heard a shout at the top of the passage—on the other hand I felt that the tide was running in, and to stay where I was would soon be impossible.

"I have never spoken of that night before," said he, "and I allude to it even now merely to tell this English gentleman and his friends how groundless would be the idea that the soldiers and nobles of an unfortunate country made their escape before they had both suffered and done a good deal.

"But I must not detain you," said he, "any longer with an adventure which had not the common merit of a Boulevard spectacle; for it ended in neither the blowing up of a castle nor, as you may perceive, in the fall of the principal performer. As the tide rushed up through the works I naturally receded, until at length I was caught sight of by the rabble. They poured down, and were now within a hundred yards of me, while I could not move. At that moment a strong light flashed along the cavern from the river, and I discovered, for the first time, that it too was not above a hundred yards from me. I had been a good swimmer in early life: I rushed on, soon reached the stream, and found that the light came from one of the boats which fish the Loire at night. I got on board; the fishermen carried me to the other side; I made my way

across the country, reached one of my garrisons, found the troops, fortunately, indignant at the treatment which the king's colours had received; marched at the head of two thousand men by daybreak, and by noon was in the Grande Place of Nantz, proceeding to try a dozen of the ringleaders who had not been merely rebels, but robbers and murderers, and, amid the acclamations of the honest citizens, giving them over to the fate which villains in every country deserve, and which is the only remedy for rebellion in any. But my example was not followed; and as his Majesty would not consent to bring me to the scaffold for doing my duty, he compromised the matter, by an order to travel for a year, and a passport for England."

Mariamne was a "*belle dame*," and a remarkably pretty one. She was therefore entitled to all the privileges of prettiness; and it must be confessed that she enjoyed them to a very animated extent.

Mariamne's foreign birth had given her foreign manners; and as she had been rendered by her late adventure all but the affianced bride of Lafontaine, she immediately assumed all the rights of a bride; treated him as her slave, received his friends at her villa with French favouritism, and opened her heart to them all, from the old general downwards, even to me. I had never seen a creature so joyous, with all her soul so speaking on her lips, and all her happiness so sparkling in her eyes. She was now continually forming some party, some ingenious surprise of pleasure, some little sportive excursion, some half-theatric scene, to keep all our hearts and eyes as much alive as her own. Lafontaine obviously did not like this; and some keen encounters of their wits took place, on the pleasure which, as he averred, "she took in all society but his own."

"If the charge be true," said she one day, "why am I in fault? It is so natural to try to be happy."

"But to be happy without me, Mariamne!"

"Ah, what an impossibility!" laughed the little foreigner.

"But to receive the attentions even of the general, old enough to have married your grandmother!"

"Well, does it not show his taste, even in your own opinion, to follow your example, and admire what you tell me *you* adore?"

"You are changed, you are a *girouette*, Mariamne."

"Well, nothing in the world is so melancholy as to let all the world pass by without a thought, a feeling, or a wish. One might as well be one of the pictures in the Louvre, pretty and charming, and gazed at by all the passers-by, without a glance for any of them in return."

"Was this the language you held to me when we first met, Mariamne?"

"Was this the language *you* held to me when we first met, Charles? But I shall lose my spirits if I talk to you. What a sweet evening! What a delicious breeze! *Bon soir!*" And forth she went, tripping it amongst the beds of flowers like a sylph, followed by Lafontaine, moody and miserable, yet unable to resist the spell. But evil days were at hand; trials more severe than the pretty arguments of lovers awaited them; and Lafontaine was to prove himself a hero in more senses than one, before they met again.

It happened that I was somewhat a favourite with Mariamne. Yet I was the only one of whom Lafontaine never exhibited a suspicion. In fact, he almost formally gave his wild bird into my charge. Accordingly, whenever he was called to London, which was not unfrequently the case, I was her chosen companion; and as she delighted in galloping over the hills and vales of Sussex, I was honoured by being her chief equerry; she repaying the service by acting as my cicerone.

"Come," said she one day, at the end of an excursion, or rather a race of some miles along the shore, "have you ever seen Les Intérieurs?"

"No."

"I saw you," she remarked, "admiring the Duchesse de Saint Alainville, at our little ball the other night."

"It was impossible to refuse admiration. She is the noblest-looking woman I ever saw."

"*One* of the noblest, sir, if you please. But, as I disdain the superb in everything"——she fixed her bright eyes on me. I recovered my error.

"I admit that the fascinating is much superior." A slight blush touched her cheek, she bowed, and all was good-humour again.

"Well, then," said she, "since you *have* shown yourself rational at last, I shall present you to this stately paragon in her own palace. You shall see your idol in her morning costume, her French reality."

She touched the door of a cottage with her whip, and a bowing domestic appeared. "Is her grace visible?" was the question. "Her grace receives French society to-day," was the answer. My companion looked doubtful, but there was no retreating. We alighted from our horses to attend the "reception."

The cottage was simply a cottage, roofed with thatch, and furnished in the homeliest style of the peasants to whom it had belonged. A few objects of higher taste were to be seen in the apartment to which we were now ushered—a pendule, a piano, and one or two portraits richly framed, and with ducal coronets above them. But, to my great embarrassment, the room was full, and full of the first names of France; yet the whole assemblage were female, and the glance which the duchess cast from her *fauteuil*, as I followed my rather startled guide into the room, showed me that I had committed some terrible solecism in intruding on the party. My pretty guide, on finding herself with all those dark eyes fixed on her, and all those stately features looking something between sorrow and surprise, faltered, and grew alternately red and pale. We were both on the point of retiring, when the duchess, after a brief consultation with some of the surrounding matronage, made a sign to Mariamne to approach. The result was a most gracious smile from Madame la Présidente, and I took my seat in silence and submission.

I never saw so many handsome women together before or since.

On my return to French society, in after years, I was absolutely astonished at the change which seemed to have taken place in the features of high life. I shall not hazard my reputation for gallantry by tracing the contrast more closely. But evil times had singularly acted upon the physiognomy even of the nobles. The age of the *roturier* had been the climacteric of France.

The assemblage was a singular and a melancholy one The news from France had become hourly more fearful.

Paris was already in the power of the populace. The struggle continued, however hopelessly, in the provinces, only enough to swell the losses of noble life, and the conflagrations of noble property. To those wounds of feeling had now to be added sufferings of a still more pressing nature: their remittances had begun to fail. The property which they had left in the hands of their Parisian bankers had either become valueless by the issue of assignats, which no one would take, or confiscated in the general plunder of the banks, whose principals had been thrown into prison on *suspicion* of being worth robbing. All was bankruptcy.

The duchess made a slight attempt, evidently a painful one, to explain to us, as strangers, the purpose of their unusual meeting. "The letters from France are dreadful," said she; "and it will be our duty to show that as we have enjoyed prosperity, we can submit to suffering. We must now prepare to earn our bread by those accomplishments which we acquired in happier times, and, as we once supposed, for happier times."

A general sigh seemed to break from every heart, and Mariamne hung on the hand of the duchess, and grew pale. There was silence for a while; at length she resumed,—"We must not return to our own country, at least until this horrid struggle is at an end, for we should only embarrass those who have sent us to the protection of this generous land, and for whose sake we live. Yet we only do honour to them by avoiding to eat the bread of dependence while we can labour for ourselves." Those words, few as they were, were uttered with many a pause, and in the low tone of a true mourner. The speaker then called a beautiful girl towards her. The girl rose, hesitated, and sank again. "Clotilde, my love," said she, "here are none but friends; we must forget everything but patience and our country." As she at length approached the duchess, with her noble and expressive countenance suffused with crimson, and her fine eye involuntarily raised to heaven, I thought that I had never seen beauty before. Her contribution was a drawing of some size, and of singular elegance—an Arcadian festival. It was sent round the room, with universal admiration; a

the ice thus once broken, a succession of proficients followed, bringing the produce of their talents: some, miniatures; some, sketches of French and Swiss scenery; some, illustrations of Racine and the French theatre; and many with embroidery, and the graceful works of the needle.

The harp and piano were then brought forward; and this was the most trying part of all—not from any want of skill in the performers, for the majority were perfect on both instruments, but from the nature of the performances themselves. France is not renowned for native music; yet neither Italian genius nor German science has produced more exquisite snatches of melody than are to be found in some of the nooks and corners of the provinces. Sorrow, solitude, and love are everywhere, and their inspiration is worth all the orchestras in the globe.

Those simple airs were more congenial to the depressed spirits of the whole assemblage than the most showy bravuras; and, sung by those handsome creatures—for beauty adds a charm to everything—they retained me spell-bound. All the world knows that there is nothing which revives memories like music. But those were the airs which they had heard and sung from their infancy; the airs of their early companionships, hopes, and, perhaps, loves; sung in their gardens, their palaces, at their parents' knees, by the cradles of their children, at their firesides; everywhere combining with the heart. Sung now in their exile, they brought back to each heart some recollection of the happiest scenes and fondest ties of its existence. No power of poetry, nor even of the pencil, could have brought the past so deeply, so touchingly, with such living sensibility before them. Some wept silently and abundantly; some buried their faces on their knees, and by the heaving of their bosoms alone showed how they felt; some sat with their large eyes fixed on heaven, and their lips moving as in silent prayer; some almost knelt, with hands clasped and eyes bent down, in palpable supplication. I felt myself doubly an intruder, and was thinking how I might best glide away, when I saw Mariamne, in an attempt like my own, to move, suddenly fall at the feet of the duchess. She had fainted. I carried her into the open air, where she

soon recovered. I placed her on her horse, and we moved quietly and sadly away.

"That was a strange scene," said I after a long interval of silence.

"Very," was the laconic reply.

"I am afraid it distressed you," I observed.

"I would not have seen it for any consideration, if I could have known what it was," she answered, with a new gush of tears. "Yet what must my feelings be to theirs? They lose everything."

"But they bear the loss nobly."

"Oh, who can tell what they are dreaming of in their distraction?" she said, with a deep sigh. "It was probably to turn their talents to some account, to send their works to London, and live by them—poor things, how little they know of London! Revolutions are terrible things!" We lapsed into silence again.

"I pity most the more advanced in life," I resumed. "The young are more elastic, and bear misfortune by the mere spirit of youth; and the lovely find friends everywhere. Did you observe the noble air, the almost heroine look, of that incomparable girl who first showed her drawing?" Mariamne shot a quick glance at me.

"You have quite forgotten her name, I suppose?" said she, with a scrutinizing look.

"Not wholly. I think the duchess called her Clotilde."

"I shall set you at ease, sir, upon that point," said she smartly. "But of one thing I can assure you, and it is, that she is engaged to be married to her second cousin, the Marquis de Montrecour. So, you see, it is scarcely worth your while to inquire anything more of her name, as she is about to change it so soon; but it is De Tourville, a descendant of the renowned admiral who lost a renowned French fleet a hundred years ago."

I have never presumed to possess a master key to female hearts; but there was something half contemptuous, half piqued, in my fair companion's tone, and a rapid interchange of colour in her cheeks, which set me musing. She touched her horse with her fairy whip, and cantered on a few paces before me. I followed, as became a faithful squire. She suddenly reined up, and said, in the voice of

one determined that I should feel the point of the sting—"Oh, I had forgot—I beg a thousand pardons. *Yesterday* the marquis arrived in London. His proposal reached madame la comtesse this morning, the young lady's mother—your *heroine*, I think you called her. The *trousseau* will probably be sent down from London in a week, and then, I presume, you will be relieved from all *anxiety* upon the subject."

I was all astonishment. The language would have been an impertinence in any one else; yet, in the pretty and piquant Mariamne, it was simply coquettish. At any other time or place I might have felt offended; but I was now embarrassed, wordless, and plunged in problems. Why should I be concerned in this news? What was the opinion of this butterfly to me? yet its sarcasm stung me. What was Clotilde to me? yet I involuntarily wished the Marquis de Montrecour at the bottom of the Channel.

But this was destined to be a day of adventures. I had led my fair companion a circuit through the Downs, in the hope of reviving her by the fresh air, before we reached the villa; and we were moving slowly along over the velvet turf, and enjoying that most animating of all the breaths of sky or earth, the sea-breeze, when Mariamne's steed, one of the most highly *manèged* and most beautiful of animals, began to show signs of restlessness, pricked up its ears, stopped suddenly, and began to sniff the gale with an inflated nostril. As if the animal had communicated its opinions to its fellow, both our horses set off at a smart trot, the trot soon became a canter, the canter a gallop. Mariamne was a capital horsewoman, and the exercise put her in spirits again. After a quarter of an hour of this volunteer gallop, from the top of one of the Downs we saw the cause—the Sussex hunt, ranging the valley at our feet. Our horses suddenly became irrestrainable, and both rushed down the hill together. The peril of such a descent instantly caught all eyes. A broad and high fence surrounded the foot of the hill, and as we flew wildly down, the whole hunt had stopped in evident alarm. In another moment we had reached the fence. Mariamne's horse, making a desperate spring, flew over it. Mine failed, and threw me into the middle of the hedge. I was stunned, the sight left my eyes; and when I opened them again,

a man of a peculiarly striking countenance and stately figure was raising me from the ground, while an attendant was pouring brandy down my throat. My first thought was of my unfortunate companion. "Where is the lady? Is she safe? What has become of her?" were my first exclamations. "Are you much hurt?" inquired the stranger. "No, no," I cried; "where is the lady?" "I hope, by this time, safe," said he; "some gentlemen of the party have followed her: her horse has run away with her; but they will doubtless overtake her in a few minutes." He ascended a small rising ground close to us, and stood gazing in the distance. "No, they are following her still. She keeps her seat. They are now taking a short cut to intercept her. They are close up—no, that mad animal of a horse has thrown them all out again, he springs over everything; yet she still holds on. What a capital horsewoman!" While he uttered those broken exclamations, I rolled on the ground in torture. At length, after a pause, I heard him say, in a shuddering voice, "All's over! that way leads direct to the cliff."

At the words, though dizzy with pain, and scarcely able to see, I seized the bridle of the groom's horse, who had alighted to assist me; without a word, sprang on his back, and dashing in the spur was gone like an arrow. The whole group soon followed.

From the first rising ground I saw the frightful chase continued. Mariamne's hat had fallen off, and her hair and habit were flying in the wind. She was bending to the neck of her steed, whom the pursuit of the hunt, and the sight of their red coats, had evidently frightened. He was darting rather than galloping along, by wild bounds, evidently growing feeble, but still distancing his pursuers. Half dead with pain and terror, I could scarcely hold the bridle, and was soon overtaken by the stranger. "Sir," said he, "you are exhausted, and will never be able to overtake the unfortunate lady in that direction. I know the country, follow me." Unable to answer, I followed; my ears ringing with a thousand sounds, and my thoughts all confusion. I was awakened from this half stupor by a tremendous outcry.

On the brow of the hill before me were the dozen jaded

riders, forced to draw rein by the steepness of the declivity, and all pointing with vehement gestures below. In the next instant, through the ravine at its foot, and within a hundred yards of the cliff, came Mariamne, still clinging to the horse, and flying like the wind. The look which she cast upon me, as she shot by, haunted me for years after, whenever an image of terror rose in my dreams. Her eyes were starting from their sockets, her lips gasping wide, her visage ghastliness itself. Another moment, and all must be over; for at the end of the valley was the sea, a hundred and fifty feet below. I rushed after her. The sight of the sea had struck her at once. She uttered a scream, and fell with her forehead on the horse's neck. Even that movement probably checked him, for he reared, and before his feet touched the ground again I was close to him; with a frantic effort I caught his bridle, and swept his head round. Mariamne dropped, voiceless, sightless, and breathless, into my arms. The spot where she was saved was within a single bound of the precipice!

The hunters now came round us, and all was congratulation. Our escape was pronounced "miraculous;" I was complimented on all kinds of heroism; and the stranger, evidently the chief personage of the circle, after giving the glance of a connoisseur at poor Mariamne's still pallid, yet expressive countenance, thanked me "for having allowed him to breathe at last, which he had not done, he believed, for some minutes, through terror." Nothing could exceed the graceful interest which he expressed in my companion's safety. His grooms were sent to look for assistance in all quarters, and it was not until a carriage had arrived from the next village, and he had seen Mariamne placed in it, that he could be persuaded to take his leave. Even in after life, when I saw him in all the splendour of the world, himself its ruling star, and heard him so often quoted as

"The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,"

I thought that he never deserved the title more than when I saw him perform the duties of simple good nature to two unknown individuals on a wild heath on the Sussex shore.

This adventure, by all the laws of romance, should have

made me fall in love with Mariamne, or Mariamne fall in love with me. But reality has laws of a different kind, and the good fortune of being just in time to save a lady's life, whether on horseback or on foot, whether in lake or river, whatever it might be in any other ages, is not necessarily a pledge of eternal constancy in our times.

It may be true, that if the choice depended on her father, I should have been the possessor of her fair hand, and the heir to his half-million, and equally true that the event might have saved me a half-million of troubles. Even at this hour I sometimes cannot help thinking how total a change must have been given to my anxious career—how many desperate struggles I should have escaped—if I had thus found my path covered, like an eastern potentate's, with cloth of gold!

I had another trial to undergo in the temper of Mordecai. The sight of a post-chaise flying along the shore, with one of the royal grooms as outrider, had brought him and all the inmates of the villa to the door. From the entrance of the avenue, I saw Mordecai standing, straight and silent as one of the pillars of his portico, with his arms folded, and his eye lowering under his huge brow, like one prepared for calamity. But, when the carriage drove up to the door, and I raised his helpless and ashy-coloured daughter in my arms, he gazed for an instant on her, and then, with a howl, like that of a wild animal pierced by bullet or steel, fell on his face on the ground. He evidently thought that she was dead.

Even when at last she opened her feeble eyelids, smiled, and took his hand, he could scarcely be persuaded that she was still alive. He raved, he tore his hair, he vowed deathless vengeance, and the vengeance of all his race, upon the "murderer of his beloved, the child of his soul, the last scion of his name, his angel Mariamne."

At length Mariamne, dreading an actual collision between us, rose with an effort, tottered across the room, and threw her arms round her father's neck. The old man was then conquered at once; his countenance grew calm; he sat down upon the floor, and, with his daughter hiding her face in his bosom, wept silently and long. When I saw him

thus quieted, I left them together, and retired to my chamber.

I employed myself in packing up my equipments for the journey; but this was soon done, and the question was how to get rid of the remainder of the evening. I was resolved to meet Mordecai no more; and the servant who announced that dinner was ready, was sent back with an answer that a violent headache prevented my leaving my room. The headache was true; and I had a reluctance equally true to see the "human face divine" for that evening at least. There was one exception to that reluctance, for thoughts had begun to awake in me, from which I shrank with something little short of terror. There was one "human face divine" which I would have made a pilgrimage round the world to see—but it was not under the roof of Mordecai. It was in one of the little cottages on which I was then looking from my window, and yet which seemed placed by circumstances at an immeasurable distance from me. It was the countenance of a stranger—one with whom I had never exchanged a word, who was probably ignorant of my existence, whom I might never see again, and yet whom I felt to be my fate. I leave to others the *ideal* of life. Mine has been the *real*, and it has been stern and struggling.

CHAPTER VIII.

As I sat at my window, gazing vaguely on the sea, then unruffled by a breath, and realizing all the images of evening serenity, a flight of curlews darted screaming by, and awoke me from my reverie. I took my gun, and followed them along the sand. My sportsmanship was never of the most zealous order, and my success on this occasion did not add much to the mortality of the curlews. But the fresh air revived me, I felt my elasticity of foot and frame return, and I followed for some miles along the windings of the shore. The sea was rolling in huge billows to the shore. The sun had sunk as suddenly as if it had been drowned. The hills were visible but for a moment, gleamed ghastly in the last light, and were then

covered with mist. One of those storms common in autumn had come on, and I was now to find shelter where I could, in the wilderness.

I was vigorous and hardy, but my situation began to be sufficiently embarrassing; for I was at least half a dozen miles from home; and the fog, rising from the waters, soon rendered the whole face of the country one cloud. To move a single step now was hazardous. I could judge even of my nearness to the ocean only by its roar. The rain soon added to my perplexities, for it began to descend, less in showers than in sheets.

All vexations seem trifling when they are once over; but, for full two hours of this pelted pilgrimage, I felt sensations which might have cured me of solitary sporting for the rest of my existence.

At the end of those hours, which appeared to me of ten times the length, I heard the barking of a dog; and rejoicing in it, as one of the most welcome of all possible sounds, I worked, felt, and waded my way to the door of a building, at which, without ceremony, I asked for entrance. My application was for some time unanswered; but I heard a rustling within, which made me repeat my request in various ways. After trying my eloquence in vain, I offered a guinea for a bed. A window was now opened above, and showed a pair of heads. I now doubled my offer, my whole purse amounting to no more, and was let in.

My hosts were two; one, an old woman, hideous with age and ferocity of feature, but the other a young one, with a handsome but bold countenance, whose bronze had obviously been borrowed as much from free living as from the sea-breeze. The women at first were rather reluctant to enter into any conversation; but when, to make my reception welcome, I laid the two guineas down on the table, their hearts became thawed at once, and their tongues flowed; my wet clothes were exchanged for the fisherman's wardrobe, and a tolerable supper was put on the table. Some luxuries, which I might not have found under roofs of more pretension, were produced one after the other.

In the midst of our festivity, the dog sprang to the

door, and a sound like that of a horn or conch-shell was heard through the roar of the gale. The women started from their seats in evident consternation, swept away the remnants of the supper, and conveyed me into an adjoining closet, where they begged of me to keep close, not to speak a syllable, let what would happen, and, as I valued my life and theirs, not to mention thereafter whatever I might see or hear. It was now plain that I was in the house of smugglers; and as those were notoriously people not to be trifled with, I made my promises of non-intervention with perfect sincerity.

I was scarcely in my nook when the party arrived. They were six or seven—their conversation was the common bluster and boisterousness of their trade—and between their demands for supper, their coarse jokes, and their curses, they kept the house in an uproar. They expected a cargo from Calais that night. Scouts were sent out from time to time to look for signals, but nothing appeared. At length the brandy was beginning to take effect on their brains, and their rough jokes rose into quarrel. A charge of treachery produced the drawing of cutlasses, and I heard them slashing at each other; but the right Nantz which had inflamed the quarrel, rendered it comparatively harmless, until one lost his balance, rolled headlong against my door, and burst it in. There stood I, visible to all; and the sight produced a yell, in which the epithets of "spy, exciseman, custom-house shark," and a whole vocabulary, all equally remote from panegyric, were showered upon me. I should probably have been cut down by some of the blades which flashed before me, but that I had accidentally carried my gun into the closet, and was evidently determined to fight it out. This produced a parley: I told my tale, and as it was corroborated by the women, who came forward trembling at the sight of their savage masters, and spoke with the sincerity of fear, it saved me further encounter, and I was merely enjoined to pledge my word that I would not betray them.

The compromise was scarcely brought to a conclusion when the discharge of a pistol was heard outside; and as this was their signal, the whole party prepared to leave the house. I now expected to be left to such slumbers as I

could find in the midst of rocking roofs and rattling doors and windows. But this was not to be. After a short consultation at the door, one of them returned, and desired me to throw on a fisherman's dreadnought which was smoking beside the fire, and follow him. Against this, however, I vehemently protested.

The fellow's face flushed, and, with something of an oath, he went to the door, gave a whistle, and returned next minute with a dozen powerful fellows, all armed. Contest was now useless, and we marched to the point of waiting for the barque from Calais.

The storm had increased in violence, and the howling of the wind and the thunder of the billows on the shore were tremendous. The night was pitch dark, and the winding paths along which we rather slid than walked, would not have been easy to find even during the day, but my party strode along with the security of perfect knowledge. The country seemed alive round us.

The whole country had apparently two existences, a day and a night one—a day and a night population—the clown and his tillage in the light—the smuggler and his trade in the dark—and the same peasant frequently exhibiting a versatility for which John Bull seldom gets credit.

Our numbers had evidently grown as we advanced, and at length a whistle brought us to a general stand. One of the party now touched my sleeve, and said, "Sir, you must follow me." The cliff was so near, that thoughts not much to the credit of my companions came into my head, and I drew back. The man observed it, and said, "The captain *must* see you, sir. You may trust *me*—I served on board of Rodney's ship."

Of course this was an appeal to my honour, which could not be refused without hurting his etiquette most grievously, and I followed. After two or three windings through an excavation in the cliff, we came in front of a blazing fire, screened from external eyes by a pile of ship timbers. Before the fire was a table with bottles; and at it a man busily writing. On raising his eyes, the recognition was instant and mutual. I saw, in his strong features, my companion on the roof of the Royal Sussex Stage, whose disappearance had been the subject of so much inquiry.

He palpably knew a good deal more of me than I did of him, and, after a moment's embarrassment and thrusting papers and pistols into the drawer of a table, he asked me to sit down, hurried to the mouth of the cavern, heard the story of my capture from the sailor, and returned, with his forehead rather smooth.

"I am sorry, sir," said he, "that the absurdity of my people has given you a walk at this time of night; but they are rough fellows, and their orders are to be on the *qui vive*."

My answer was, "That I had been treated civilly; and, as circumstances had brought it about, I did not so much dislike the adventure after all."

"Well spoken, young gentleman," was his reply. "Circumstances rule everything in this world. Pray," added he, with a peculiar look, "how did you leave my friend Mordecai?"

I laughed, and he followed my example. Tossing off a glass of wine, and filling up a bumper for me—

"Well, then," said he, "suppose we drink the Jew's health. I gave you a rather strange character of him, I think. Make a hard bargain with Mordecai, and ten to one but you are caught in his trap. Throw yourself on his mercy; and, if the whim takes him, I have known him as generous as any other."

I replied that his generosity or his craft was now a matter of very little importance to me, for I had determined to return to London by daybreak. He expressed surprise, and gaily asked whether I was insensible to the charms of the fair Mariamne. Our further conversation was interrupted by the sound of a gun from seaward, and we went out together.

The sight was now awful; the tide had risen, and the storm was at its height. We could scarcely keep on our feet, except by clinging to the rocks. The bursts of wind came almost with the force of cannon-shot; and the men, who now seemed to amount to several hundreds, were seen by the glare of the lightnings grasping each other in groups along the shore and the hills, the only mode in which they could save themselves from being swept away like chaff. The rain had now ceased its continual pour,

but it burst in sharp, short showers, that smote us with the keenness of hail. The sea, to the horizon, was white with its own dashings, and every mountain surge that swept to the shore was edged with light—the whole one magnificent sheet of phosphor and foam. Yet, awful as all was, all was so exciting that I actually enjoyed the scene. The excitement grew stronger still when the report of two guns from seaward, the signal for the approach of the lugger, followed almost immediately by a broadside, told us that we were likely to see an action before her arrival. As she rose rapidly upon the horizon, her signals showed that she was chased by a government cruiser, and one of double her size. Of the superior weight of metal in the pursuer, we soon saw sufficient proofs in her heavy fire. Except by superior manœuvring, there was clearly no chance for the lugger. But, in the mean time, all that could be done on shore was done. A huge fire sprang up instantly on the cliff, muskets were discharged, and shouts were given, to show that her friends were on the alert. But the captain's countenance fell, and as he strode backwards and forwards along the shore, I could hear his wrath in continued grumblings.

"Fool and brute!" he cried, "this all comes of his being unable to hold his tongue. The skipper has blabbed, otherwise we should not have had anything better than a rowboat in our wake."

The cannonade began now to be returned by the lugger, and the captain's spirits revived. Coming up to me, he said, wiping the thick perspiration from his brow, "This, sir, is a bad night's job, I am afraid; but if the blockhead in command of that lugger had only sea-room, I doubt whether he would not give the revenue craft enough to do yet."

He now stood, with his teeth firm set, and his night glass to his eye, bluff against the storm. A broadside came rolling along.

"By Jove! one would think that he had heard me," he exclaimed. "Well done, Dick Longyarn! The shark has got that in its teeth. He is leading the cruiser a dance."

The crowd on shore followed the manœuvres with not

less interest. Every glass was at the eye, and I constantly heard their grumblings and disapprovals, as some luckless turn of the helm exposed the lugger to the cruiser's fire. "The skipper in command of that boat," said the captain at my side, "is one of the best seamen on the coast, as bold as a bull, and will fight anything; but he is as leaky as a sieve."

"But he fights his vessel well," I observed.

"So he does," was the reply; "but if he should have that lugger captured before a keg touches the sand, and if the whole goes into the custom-house instead of reaching the cellars of the owners, it will be all his fault."

The ships were at length so near us, that we could easily see the splinters flying from the sides of both, and the havoc made among the rigging was fearful; yet, except for the anxiety, nothing could be more beautiful to us than the manœuvres of both. The cruiser was gallantly commanded, and her masterly management upon a lee shore often forced involuntary admiration even from the captain.

"A clever lad that revenue man, I must own," said he; "but it is well worth his while, for if he catch that lugger, he will have laid hold of twenty thousand pounds' worth of as hard-earned money as ever crossed the Channel. I myself have a thousand in silk on board."

"Then all is not brandy that she brings over?"

"Brandy!" said the captain, with a bitter smile. "They would be welcome to all the brandy she carries to-night, if that were all. She has a cargo of French silks, French claret, ay, and French gold, that she must fight for while she has a stick standing."

At this moment, the sky, dark as it was before, grew tenfold darker; and a cloud, that gave me the exact image of a huge black velvet pall, suddenly dropped down and completely covered both vessels. The same thought occurred to us both at once. "Those brave boys are all in their coffin together," slowly murmured my companion. There was neither shout nor even word among the crowd; and the men began to run along the water's edge to find a fragment of the wrecks, or assist some struggler for life in the surge. But the cloud, which absolutely lay upon the water, suddenly burst open, and both vessels were seen. A sheet

of lightning showed them with a lurid distinctness infinitely clearer than day. Every remaining shroud and rope, every wound of mast or yard, every shot-hole, nay, every rib and streak of the hulls, was distinctly visible. But their decks, as the heave of the surge bowed them towards us, showed a fearful spectacle. The dying and the dead flung along the gangways, the wounded clinging to the gun-carriages or masts, a few still loading the guns, yet both ships still flying on, shattered and torn, and looking, in the wild light, like two gigantic skeletons.

The lugger now fired a rocket, and sent up a striped flag, the signal of distress. A cry for "the boats!" was echoed along the shore, and eight or ten were speedily started from their hiding-places, and dragged down the shingle. Stout hearts and strong hands were in them without loss of time, and they dashed into the storm. But their efforts were wholly useless. No strength of oars could stand against such a gale. Some were swamped at once, the men hardly escaping with their lives. All was hopeless. Another rocket went up, and by its ghastly blaze I caught a glimpse of the captain. His bronzed face was now as pale as the sand on which he lay; he was the very image of despair. Thinking that he had fainted, I laid hold of his hand, to drag him higher up the cliff after me. As if the grasp had given him renewed life, he sprang on his feet, and muttering in a distracted tone, which I alone could hear, "Better be drowned than ruined!" he cried to the men, with the voice of a maniac, "Boys, sink or swim, here I go! Five guineas for every man who gets on board." Tearing off his watch-coat, he rushed forward at the words, and plunged headlong into the billow. There was a general rush after him; some were thrown back on the sand, but about half the number were enabled to reach the lugger. We quickly saw the effect of even this reinforcement. At the very point of time when the cruiser was about to lay her on board, she came sharply round by the head, and discharged her broadside within pistol-shot. I could see the remaining mast of the cruiser stagger; it made two or three heaves, like a drunkard trying to recover his steps; then came a crash, and it went over the side. The vessel recoiled, and being now evidently unable to steer, the storm

had her at its mercy. The last that we saw of her was a hull, rolling and staggering away down the Channel, firing guns of distress, and going headforemost towards the Bay of Biscay.

Need I say with what triumph the lugger was hauled up the sand, or how her bold commander and hardy crew were received? But while a carouse was preparing for them—and it must be owned that if sailing and fighting were claims, they had earned their suppers—the business portion of the firm was in full activity. From the wagon down to the wheelbarrow, every country means of carriage was in motion without delay.

The clearance of the cargo would have put all the machinery of a royal dockyard to shame. As for the activity of the custom-house, it would have been the movement of a tortoise, to the rapidity of whatever is most rapid in unpacking or pilfering.

But, as I had no wish to be a party to what, with all its gaiety and gallantry, I felt to be a rough infraction of the law, I now begged permission to make my way homewards. It was given at once, with even some expressions of gratitude for my having, as it was termed, stood by them to the last; and a guide was ordered, as an additional civility. "You will have five miles to walk," said the captain, as he shook hands with me; "but Grapnel here will take you the shortest way, and it will be light in an hour."

My guide and I pushed on into the darkness. He was a bluff, open-hearted fellow, with all the smuggler's hatred of the magistracy, and taking great delight in telling how often they failed in their attempts to stop the "free trade," which he clearly regarded as the only trade worthy of a man. "What a glorious night!" he exclaimed, as he turned his bald forehead to a sky black as Erebus, and roaring with whirlwind. "Talk of sunshine or moonshine compared with this!" Another burst of rain or flash of lightning would evidently have rendered the scene too captivating. Both came, and I was palpably on the point of losing my guide, when he stopped short, and, in a half whisper, asked me whether I heard anything. Before I could return a word, he had flung himself on the ground,

with his ear to the sward, and, after a moment's listening, said, "Here they come!"

"Who come? Are you thinking of the custom-house officers?"

The look which I had the benefit of seeing, by a blue blaze from the zenith, and the tone of infinite scorn in which he slowly repeated the words "custom-house officers," were incomparable. "Afraid of *them!*" said he, as he rose from the wet heather; "as much afraid as the cat is of the mice. No, those are the dragoons from Lewes."

"Well, what have we to care about them?"

"Care?" said he, with a mixture of frown and grin. "Why, you see, though the fellows with their pens behind their ears are no more than six-watered gin to us, the dragoons are another sort of thing. I must go back. So, young gentleman, I wish you a very good night."

I offered him money.

"At another opportunity, sir," said he, rather pacified by the offer. "But, if they come upon the captain unawares, they will find everything ready to their hands; all at sixes and sevens just now. Don't you hear them? A lubber deserted from us a week ago, and no doubt he has laid the information."

I lay down, and clearly enough heard the trampling of horses, and in considerable numbers. My own situation was now somewhat embarrassing. They were evidently coming up in our direction; and to be found past midnight armed (for my gun had been restored to me), in company with an unquestionable smuggler, must have made appearances tell strongly against me.

"I must go back this moment, or all our comrades will be taken in the fact. And, take my advice, you had better do the same; for go I will."

I still hesitated, and he still urged.

"You can do no better, sir; for if you stand here five minutes longer, you will either be taken, or you will lose the number of your mess, by a carbine slug or the slash of a sabre; while, if you turn back, you will have ten times the chance of escape along the shore."

There was no time to deliberate. I certainly felt no inclination to be the means of the captain's ruin or death;

and I followed my guide, who set off with the swiftness of a deer.

We soon reached the shore, where our intelligence struck considerable alarm. "I thought that it would be so," said the captain; "I had notice from a friend in the customs already that a spy was at work, and it was to this that we owed the chase of the lugger. For the revenue officers I care not a straw, but the dragoons are to be avoided when we can."

Turning to me, he said, "I am sorry, Mr. Marston, that you have been brought into all this bustle; but time and chance happen to us all. We shall see each other again, but let this night be forgotten, and now good-bye once more." Then turning to my guide, he said, "This young gentleman must be seen safe along the cliff; stay with him until he sends you back again."

"Come, lads, all hands to work!" he now shouted to a group who stood at a little distance; "are the tar-barrels ready?" "Ay, ay," was the answer. They trundled three or four barrels along the shore, dragged them up the face of the cliff, and I had scarcely left them a hundred yards behind when they were in a blaze. The trampling of the dragoons was now heard coming on at full speed.

"There," said Grapnel, "I'll engage that he tricks them at last; while they are moving up to the fire, the cargo is moving off to the store. He will leave half a dozen kegs for them to make prize of, while he is carrying away clear and clean as much silk as would make gowns for all the corporation of London."

From the spot where we stood, to get, as he called it, a last peep at "the free-traders bamboozling the dragoons," we could see cavalry galloping up to the blaze, evidently sure of having made a capture. A few carts in the ravine below next caught their eye. Another beacon on another hill soon threw up its flame, and a party galloped off to examine the new phenomenon. Two or three more blazed in succession, and increased their perplexity.

"I must have one shot at them before I go," said Grapnel, "if I die for it;" and, before I could utter a word to prevent him, he discharged his pistol. This was an unlucky shot, for it drew the attention of a party of

dragoons, whom we had not before seen, in the hollow beneath. After returning a shot or two, they darted down upon the rear of the last convoy, which was silently moving under the shadow of the cliffs, with the captain and some of its stoutest followers at its head. The business now began to be serious. The captain and his men, determined not to lose their venture, made a bold resistance. The dragoons came riding in from all quarters, but the ground was unfavourable for them, besides the encumbrance of the carts and wagons, behind which the cutlasses of the smugglers were fully a match for the sabre. It was a battle on a minor scale.

But it is dangerous to be in the way of bullets, even as an amateur; for, as I stood gazing down, I felt a sudden stroke, like a shock of electricity. I staggered, and was on the point of rolling over the cliff, when Grapnel darted towards me. I just felt myself grasped by him, and lost all recollection.

On recovering my senses again, I was in Mordecai's villa, where I had been brought by some fishermen on the morning of the skirmish, and who, asking no questions and being asked none, had deposited me, bandaged and bruised as I was, at the door of the villa. If I was not sensible of this service it was at least a vast relief to the Jew, who had begun to think that his violence had urged me on some desperate course. As hasty in his repentance as in his wrath, he had no sooner become rational enough to hear his daughter's story than he was eager to make me the *amende* by all the means in his power. Perhaps he would have even lent me money, if I had met him in this penitential mood; but I was not to be found. The sight of my corded trunk convinced him that I had taken mortal offence, and he grew more uneasy still. The sight of me in the morning, laid at his hall-door, relieved his heart of a burden; and, though the silence and rapid retreat of my bearers gave him fully the suspicion that I had somehow or other been involved in the desperate business of the last twelve hours, with whose particulars he had, by some means or other, become already acquainted, he determined to watch, and, if need be, protect me, until I could leave his house in safety.

My recovery was slow. A ball had struck me on the breast, and, though it had luckily glanced off, it had produced a contusion which long threatened dangerous consequences. For a month I remained nearly insensible. At length I began to move, health returned, the sea-breeze gave me new sensations of life.

On my recovery I found an accumulation of letters on my table. Some were the mere common-places of correspondence; some were from sporting friends in the neighbourhood of the castle, detailing with due exactness the achievements of their dogs and horses; three were from the Horse Guards at successive intervals of a week—the first announcing that my commission in the Guards had received the signatures of the proper authorities, the second giving me a peremptory order to join immediately, and the third formally announcing that as I had neither joined nor assigned any reason for my absence, my commission had been cancelled!

This was an unexpected blow, and, in my state of weakness, might have been a fatal one but for my having found, at the bottom of the heap, a letter in the handwriting of Vincent. This excellent man, as if he had anticipated my vexations, wrote in a style singularly adapted to meet them at the moment.

"One rule is absolutely essential—never to mourn over the past, or mope over the future. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' is a maxim of incomparable wisdom. Never think of the failures of yesterday but to avoid them to-morrow, and never speculate on the failures of to-morrow but to remember that you have outlived the failures of to-day. I remember, in the history of some great oriental chieftain, an incident which, to me, has always had the force of an apophthegm.

"In his early life, when reduced to the utmost distress, defeated in battle, and without a follower, he once threw himself into the ruins of a Tartar caravanserai, where he resolved to give up all further effort and die, when, as he lay on the ground, sunk in despair, his eye was caught by the attempts of an ant to drag a grain of corn up to its nest in the wall. The load was too great for it, and the ant and the grain fell to the ground together. The trial was

renewed, and both fell again. It was renewed ninety and nine times, and on the hundredth it succeeded, and the grain was carried into the nest. The thought instantly struck the prostrate chieftain, 'Shall an insect struggle ninety and nine times until it succeeds, while I, a man, and the descendant of heroes, give up all hope after a single battle?' He sprang from the ground, and, by a curious freak of fortune, found a troop of his followers outside, who had been looking for him throughout the wilderness. Scimetar in hand, he threw himself on his pursuers, swelled his troop into an army, his army into myriads, and finished by being the terror of Europe, the conqueror of Asia, and the wonder of the world." The letter ended with general inquiries into the things of the day, and all good wishes for my career.

It is astonishing what an effect is sometimes produced by advice given at the exact period when we want it. This letter was that "word in season" of which the "wisest of men" speaks; and I felt all its influence in my rescue from despondency. That letter had pushed me another stage towards manhood.

With the Horse Guards' papers in my hand, and the letter of my old friend placed, in a kind of boyish romance, in my bosom, I went to meet Mordecai and his daughter. The Jew shook his bushy brows over the rescript which seemed to put a perpetual extinguisher on my military hopes. But Mariamne was the gayest of the gay on what she termed my "fortunate ill-fortune." She had now completely recovered; said she remembered nothing of her accident but "the heroism," as she expressed it, "on my part which had saved her, to thank me;" and, between her gratitude and her vivacity, might have given a spectator the idea that M. Lafontaine was rapidly losing ground with that creature of open lips and incessant smiles. Her harp was brought; she was an accomplished performer, and she surprised me by the taste and tenderness with which she sang a succession of native melodies, collected in her rambles from Hungary to the Hartz, and from the Mediterranean to the Alps and Pyrenees.

Whether the little "Seguidilla" meant anything in the lips of the songstress, I do not presume to say. However,

with all my perceptions alive to her merits, and she had many, the cause of my gallant French friend was perfectly safe in my hands.

Yet the evening which I thus spent gave me the first genuine idea of domestic happiness which I had ever received. I had seen but little of it at home. There all was either crowds, or solitude; the effort to seem delighted, or palpable discontent; extravagant festivity, or bitterness and frowns. My haughty father was scarcely approachable, unless when some lucky job shed a few drops of honey into his natural gall; and my gentle mother habitually took refuge in her chamber, with a feebleness of mind which only embittered her vexations. With the one being of my choice, I felt that it would be possible to be happy on a desert island.

Our supper was as animated as our evening. My remarks on the passing world—a world of which I then knew not much more than the astronomer does of the inhabitants of the moon—were received with an acquiescence which showed that I had already gained some ground even in the rough, though undoubtedly subtle and powerful mind of the Jew: as for Mariamne, she was all delight, and, until she took her leave of us for the night, all smiles.

As she closed the door, Mordecai laid his muscular hand on my shoulder. "A word with you, Mr. Marston;—you have rendered me the highest of all services, in saving that girl from a dreadful death. You have been of use to me in other matters also, unconsciously I aver,—but we shall talk about that another time. Now, to come to the point at once. If you can make yourself my daughter's choice—for I shall never control her—I shall not throw any obstacles in the way. What say you?"

I never felt more difficulty in an answer. My voice actually died within my lips. I experienced a feverish sensation, which must have mounted to my face, and given me the look of a clown or a criminal, if the Jew had but looked at me: but he was waiting my reply with his eyes fixed on the ground. Yet the hesitation was soon over. I was almost pledged to Lafontaine, as a man of honour; I knew that Mariamne, however she might play the coquette for the day, was already bound in heart to the gallant Frenchman.

It was not for me to divulge Mariamne's secret, and I could not even touch upon my own. I escaped from the dilemma under cover of another reason, and also a true one.

Thanking him for his kindness and candour, I observed, "that I was nothing, and had nothing; and that to offer myself to the acceptance of one entitled to wed so opulently as his daughter, would be to pain my feelings, and place me in a humiliating point of view in the presence of one whose respect I ought to deserve." Our conversation extended far into the night; and I freely entered into the disappointment which I had sustained in the unfortunate loss of my commission. I added that I was determined not to lead a life of idleness, and that as the army was the profession which gave the fairest prospect of being known to the world, I must pursue it if possible.

The idea was fully approved of by my energetic hearer. "Right!" said he. "It is exactly the thing which I should have expected from you. You shall have a commission, ay, even if it cost a thousand guineas. Never refuse. I am not in the habit of throwing away my money; but you saved Mariamne's life, and I would not have lost my child for all the bullion in the Bank of England."

I was surprised by this burst of generosity, but it was real; and the Jew, as if to put his sincerity beyond all doubt, had torn a leaf out of his pocket-book, and was writing an order for the sum on his banker: he laid it on the table. I returned it to him at once, perhaps not less to his surprise than his offer had been to mine. But I reminded him that I still had a balance at my banker's; and I told him besides that I had made up my mind to enter the regiment from which I had been so unceremoniously dismissed, or none. He stared. "If," said I, "I shall not be commissioned in the Guards, it will be utterly beyond my power to persuade even my own relatives, much less the world, that I have not been dismissed for some act of impropriety. Or, if men will not hazard saying this to my face, they will only be more likely to say it where I cannot defend myself."

"I should give my last shilling to be carrying its colours at this moment," said I, "but unfortunately money is useless there. The Guards are the favourite of royalty, and

their commissions naturally go to men of rank and fortune."

"When will you be ready?" asked my host.

"To-night—this moment."

"No. I must wait for my London letters in the morning. On their arrival we may start, and reach town before the Horse Guards closes."

At breakfast next morning Mariamne was not to be seen: she excused herself by a violent headache; and by the countenance of her abigail, generally a tolerable reflection of the temper of the female authority of a house, it was evident that I had fallen into disfavour. The mystery was soon cleared by her answer to the note which contained my farewell. It was simply the enclosure of a few hapless lines of verse in which the name of Clotilde occurred, and which had been found in the clearance of my chamber preparatory to my journey, This was decisive. Mariamne was a sovereign who, choose as she might her prime minister, would not suffer her royal attendance to be diminished by the loss of a single slave. I petitioned for a parting word; it was declined, and I had only to regret my poetic error, or my still greater error in not keeping my raptures under lock and key.

As the carriage drew up to the door, Mordecai casually asked me, "Have you left your card at the Steyne?"

"No," was the reply. "Was it necessary?"

"Absolutely so; a message has been sent frequently to inquire for you during your illness."

"Well, let us drive there at once," said I.

On reaching the prince's cottage—for cottage it then was, and nothing more—the gentleman in waiting who received my card told me that his Royal Highness had desired that whenever I called he should be apprized of my coming, "as he wished to hear the history of the accident from myself." The prince's fondness for hearing everything out of the common course was well known, and I had only to obey. I had the honour of an introduction accordingly, and was received with all the customary graces of his manner, and even with kindness. He inquired into the circumstances, and was evidently taking an interest in such parts of the narrative as I chose to give, when he was

interrupted by the arrival of a courier from London. The letters happened to be of importance, and must be answered immediately. "But," said he, with his irresistible smile, "I must not lose your story; we dine at seven. You will probably meet some whom you would be gratified by seeing. Adieu—remember, seven."

This was equivalent to a command; and there was no resource but to defer my journey for twelve hours more.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT that residence and Brighton have since become is familiar to the world—the one an oriental palace, and the other a seaside London. But at this time the surrounding landscape almost looked as it had been seen by our forefathers, the Picts. I found the prince standing with four or five gentlemen of distinguished appearance under the verandah which shaded the front of the cottage from the evening sun. All was sweetness and calm. The sunlight, falling on the amphitheatre of hills, and touching them with varieties of colour as it fell on their heights and hollows, gave the whole a glittering and fantastic aspect; while the fragrance, the stillness, and the absence of all look of life, completed the character of a scene which might have lain in fairy-land.

The prince came forward to meet me at once, introduced me to his circle, and entered into conversation; the topic was his beautiful little dwelling.

"You see, Mr. Marston," said he, "we live here like hermits, and in not much more space. I give myself credit for having made the discovery of this spot. I dare say the name of Brighthelmstone may have been in the journal of some voyager to unknown lands, but I believe I have the honour of being the first who ever made it known in London."

I fully acknowledged the taste of his discovery.

"Why," said he, "it certainly is not the taste of Kew, whose chief prospect is a chaos of chimneys, and whose chief zephyrs are the breath of brewhouses and limekilns. Hampton Court has always reminded me of a monastery. St. James's still looks the hospital that it once was. Windsor

is a noble structure—Edward's mile of palaces—but that residence is better tenanted than by a subject; while here I have a desert, it is true; but, as the poet says, or sings—

'I am monarch of all I survey.'

Nothing can live here but a fisherman, or a shrimp; and thus I am secure against the invasion of all *improvers*. W——, come here, and assist me to cure Mr. Marston of his scepticism as to the absolute impossibility of our ever being surrounded by brick and mortar."

A man of a remarkably graceful air bowed to the call, and came towards us.

"W——," said the prince, "comfort me by saying that no man can be citizenized in this corner of the world."

"I admit it to be highly improbable," was the answer. "And yet, when we know John Bull's variety of tastes, and his heroic contempt of money in indulging them, such things may be. All is chance. If the whim takes the Londoner you will have him down here without mercy. To the three per cents. nothing is impossible."

"Well, well," said the good-humoured prince, "that cannot happen for another hundred years; and in the mean time my prospect will never be shut out. Let them build or pull down pyramids, if they will. The noise of city life will never fill those fields; the smoke of an insurrection of city hovels will never mingle with the freshness of such an evening as this."

His Royal Highness was clever, but he was no prophet more than other men. Need I say that London found him out, within the tenth part of his fifty years; instead of suffering him to escape compelled him to build; and after the outlay of a quarter of a million, shut him up within his own walls, like the giant of the Arabian tales in a bottle—metamorphosing his village into a huge suburb of the huge metropolis; besieging his lawn by a circumvallation of taverns and toyshops: the sea invisible; and the landscape scattered over with prettiness of architecture created by the wealth of Cheapside?

But, simple as was the exterior of the cottage, all within was costliness, so far as it can be united with elegance. A few busts of his public friends, a few statues of the patriots of antiquity, and a few pictures of the great political

geniuses of Europe—among which the broad forehead and powerful eye of Machiavel were conspicuous—showed at a glance that we were under the roof of a political personage. A Timoleon, a Brutus, and a Themistocles, incomparably classic, stood on the plateau; a rapier which had belonged to Doria, and a sabre which had been worn by Castruccio, hung on either side of the mantelpiece. The whole had a republican tendency, but it was republicanism in gold and silver—mother-of-pearl republicanism—the Whig principle embalmed in Cellini chalices and porcelain of Frederic the Great. Fortunately the conversation wandered lightly through all the pleasanter topics of the day; the general easy intercourse of well-bred men, who met under the roof of another well-bred man to spend a few hours as agreeably as they could. The prince took his full share in the gaiety of the evening. To his exterior, nature had been singularly favourable. His figure, though full, still retained all the activity and ease of youth; his features, though by no means regular, had a general look of manly beauty; and his smile was cordiality itself. I have often since heard him praised for supreme elegance; but his manner was rather that of a man of great natural good-humour, who yet felt his own place in society, and who, in those days, possessed the intelligence which qualified him to enjoy the talents of others, without suffering from a sense of inferiority. Among those at table I was peculiarly struck with one personage, of low stature, but of singularly animated features. He was evidently a military man, and of the Sister Isle; a prime favourite with the prince and everybody; and, I think, a secretary in the prince's household. He had just returned from Paris; and, as French news was then the universal topic, he took an ample share in the conversation. The name of La Fayette happened to be mentioned, as then carrying everything before it in France.

"None can doubt his present popularity; and what is all popularity beyond the present hour?" said the secretary.

"At all events," said his Royal Highness, "I cannot doubt that he has wit, which in France was always something, and now, in the general crush of pedigree, is the

only thing. Any man who could furnish the Parisians with a *bon-mot* a day, would have a strong chance of succeeding to the throne on the first vacancy."

My story next came upon the *tapis;* and the sketch of my capture by the free-traders was listened to with polite interest.

"Very possibly I may have some irregular neighbours," was the prince's remark. "But it must be confessed that I am the intruder on their domain, not they on mine."

"On the contrary," said the secretary, "I give them no slight credit for their forbearance; for the sacking of this cottage would probably be not more difficult than beating off a revenue cruiser, and the value of their prize would be worth many a successful run."

An attendant now brought in a letter for the prince, which stopped the narrative. The prince honoured the letter with a smile.

"It is from H—— House," said he,—"a very charming woman the duchess; just enough of the woman to reconcile us to the wit, and just enough of the wit to give poignancy to the woman. She laughingly says she is growing 'heartless, harmless, and old.'"

"There is no great fear of that," observed Sir P——, "if it is to be left to her grace's own decision. On no question in the world is a fine woman more deliberate in coming to a conclusion."

"Well, well," said the prince; "*she*, at least, is privileged. Diamonds never grow old."

"They may require a little resetting now and then, however," said I.

"Yes, perhaps; but it is only once in a hundred years. If they sparkle during one generation, what can *we* ask more? Her grace tells me an excellent hit—the last flash of my old friend Selwyn. It happens that Lady ——" —another fine woman was mentioned—"has looked rather distantly upon her former associates since her husband was created a marquis. 'I inquired the other day,' says the duchess, 'for a particular friend of hers, the wife of an earl.' 'I have not seen her for a long time,' was the answer. Selwyn whispered at the moment, 'I dare say, not since the *creation*.'"

"Sheridan," observed C——, "amounts, in my idea, to a perfect wit; at once keen and polished, with nothing of either violence or virulence—nothing of the sabre or the saw; his weapon is the stiletto, fine as a needle, yet it strikes home."

"*Apropos*," said the prince, "does any one know whether there is to be a debate this evening? He was to have dined here. What can have happened to him?"

"What always happens to him," said one of the party; "he has postponed it. Ask Sheridan this week for Saturday at seven, and you will have him next week on Sunday at eight. 'Procrastination is the thief of time' to him more than, I suppose, to any other man living."

"At all events," said H——, "it is the only thief that Sheridan has to fear. His present condition defies all the skill of larceny."

At this moment a post-chaise was heard rushing up the avenue, and Sheridan soon made his appearance. He was received by the prince with evident gladness, and by all the table with congratulations "on his having arrived at all." He was abundant in apologies; among the rest "his carriage had broken down halfway"—"he had been compelled to spend the morning with Charles Fox"—"he had been subpœnaed on the trial of the Scottish conspirators"—"he had been summoned on the committee of a contested election"—"he had been at a marriage." The prince smiled sceptically enough at this succession of causes to produce the single effect of being an hour behindhand.

"The prince bows at every new excuse," said H—— at my side, "as Boileau took off his hat at every plagiarism in his friend's comedy—on the score of old acquaintance."

I had now, for the first time, an opportunity of seeing this remarkable man. He was then in the prime of his life, of his fame, and of his powers. His countenance struck me, at a glance, as the most characteristic that I had ever seen. Fancy may do much, but I thought that I could discover in his physiognomy every quality for which he was distinguished; the pleasantry of the man of the world, the keen observation of the great dramatist, the vividness and daring of the brilliant orator. His features were somewhat exaggerated, but their combination was so

powerfully intellectual, that, at the moment when he turned his face towards you, you felt that you were looking on a man of the highest order of faculties. None of the leading men of his day had a physiognomy so palpably mental. Burke's spectacled eyes told but little; Fox, with the grand outlines of a Greek sage, had no mobility of feature; Pitt was evidently no favourite of whatever goddess presides over beauty at our birth. But Sheridan's countenance was the actual mirror of one of the most glowing, versatile, and vivid minds in the world. His eyes alone would have given expression to a face of clay. I never saw in human head orbs so large, of so intense a black, and of such sparkling lustre. His manners, too, were then admirable; easy without negligence, and respectful, as they ought to be in the guest at a royal table, yet without a shadow of servility. He was also wholly free from that affectation of saying good things which naturally tempts a man who cannot help knowing that his good things are recorded. In the midst of our gaiety, the contraction of his deep and noble brows showed that he was wandering far away from the slight topics of the table; and I could imagine what he might be when struggling against the gigantic strength of Pitt, or thundering against Indian tyranny before the peerage in Westminster Hall.

The prince, who, under Cyril Jackson, had acquired no trivial scholarship, now alluded to a singular poetic production, *printed*, as he remarked, in 1618, which seemed distinctly to announce the French Revolution:—

"Festinat propere cursu jam temporis ordo,
Quo locus, et Franci majestas prisca, senatus,
Papa, sacerdotes, missæ, simulacra, Deique
Fictitii, atque omnis superos exosa potestas,
Judicio Domini justo sublata peribunt."*

* The time is rushing on
When France shall be undone;
And like a dream shall pass
Pope, monarch, priest and mass;
When vengeance shall be just,
And all her shrines be dust,
And wrath shall dig the grave
Of sovereign and of slave.

"The production is certainly curious," remarked W——; "but poets always had something of the fortune-teller; and it is striking that in many of the Middle-Age Italian Latinists you will find more instances of strong declamation against Rome, and against France as its chief supporter, than perhaps in any other authorship of Europe. The Revolution is but the ripening of the disease; the hydrophobia which has been coldly lurking in the system for centuries."

"Why, then," said Sheridan, abruptly, as if awaking from a reverie, "shall we all wonder at what all expected? France is running mad, without waiting for the moon—mad in broad day; stripping off not merely the royal livery which she wore for the last five hundred years with so much the look of a well-bred footman, but tearing away the last coverture of the national nakedness. Well, then, in a week or two of this process, she will have got rid not only of church and king, but of laws, property, and freedom. But what business have we to interfere?"

"But, at least, we know that mischief is already done among ourselves. Those French affairs are dividing our strength in the House," remarked C——.

"What then?" quickly demanded Sheridan. "What is it to me if others have the nightmare, while I feel my eyes open? Burke, in his dreams, may dread the example of France; but I as little dread it as I should a conflagration at the Pole. My proposition is, that the example of France is more likely to make slaves of us than republicans. I laugh at the whole as a bugbear. I have no fear of France as either a schoolmaster or a seducer of England. France is lunatic, and who dreads a lunatic after his first paroxysm? Disgust, decay, perhaps death, are the natural results. Proceed to chain, taunt, or torment the lunatic, and he rewards the rashness of your regimen by knocking out your brains."

"Those are not exactly the opinions of our friend Charles," observed the prince, with peculiar emphasis.

"No," was the reply. "But I ask no man to think for me; I think for myself. Burke would gather all the dignitaries of Church and State, and would treat him as a demoniac, attempt to exorcise the evil spirit, and, if it

continued intractable, solemnly excommunicate the possessed, by bell, book, and candle. But as I do not like throwing away my trouble, *I* should let him alone."

"The doctrine of confiscation is startling to all property," remarked the prince. "I wish Charles would remember that his strength lies in the aristocracy."

"No man knows it better," observed W——. "Yet I strongly doubt whether the consciousness of his own extraordinary talents is not at this moment tempting him into hazard. The multitude are a new element to him, and to all. Fox has managed the aristocracy so long, and has bridled them with so much the hand of a master, that what he might have once considered as an achievement he now regards as child's play."

All listened, and expressive glances passed round the table. The speaker observed them, and resumed, but in a still firmer tone:—

"If Alexander's taming Bucephalus was a triumph for a noble boy, I scarcely think that after passing the Granicus he would have been proud of his fame as a horse-breaker. Fox sees, as all men see, that great changes, for either good or ill, are coming on the world."

The glitter of Sheridan's eye, and the glow which passed across his cheek as he looked at the speaker, showed how fully he agreed with the conception; and he laughingly said, "At all events, whatever the Revolution may do for our neighbours, it will do a vast deal of good to ourselves. The clubs were growing so dull that I began to think of withdrawing my name from them all. White's was an hospital of the deaf and dumb, and Brooke's strongly resembled Westminster Hall in the long vacation. It was in the midst of this general doze that the news from Paris came. The effects were miraculous—the universal spasm of locked jaw was no more. Men no longer regarded each other with a despairing glance in St. James's-street, and then passed on. All was sudden sociability. Even in the city people grew communicative, and puns were committed that would have struck their forefathers with amazement."

The newspapers now arrived, and France, for a while, engrossed the conversation. The famous Mirabeau had

just made an oration with which all France was ringing.

"That man's character," said the prince, after reading some vehement portions of his speech, "perplexes me more and more. An aristocrat by birth, he is a democrat by passion; but he has palpably come into the world too early or too late for power. Under Louis XIV. he would have made a magnificent minister; under his successor, a splendid courtier; but under the present unfortunate king, he must be either the brawler or the buffoon, the incendiary or the sport of the multitude."

"I always," said Sheridan, "am inclined to predict well of the man who takes advantage of his time. There are thousands who have ability for one who knows how to make use of it, as we are told that there are vast quadrupeds in the depths of the ocean which never come up to the light. But I prefer your leviathan, which, whether he slumbers in the calm or rushes through the storm, shows all his magnitude to the eye."

"And gets himself harpooned for his pains," observed W——.

"Well, then, at least he dies the death of a hero," was the reply, "'tempesting the brine,' and perhaps even sinking the harpooner."

"Will Mirabeau redeem France?" asked the prince; "or will he overwhelm the throne? That is the great question."

"I never heard of any one but Saint Christopher," said Sheridan, with sudden sportiveness, "who could walk through the ocean, and yet keep his head above water. I fear that Mirabeau is out of soundings already."

"Burke," said F——, "predicts that he must perish; that the Revolution will go on, increasing in its terrors; and that it would be as easy to stop a planet launched through space as the progress of France to ruin."

"So be it," said Sheridan, with a grave change of tone and aspect, "if it is the law of things. I have no love for winter, but without it we should have neither spring, summer, nor autumn. I fear no revolutions here; for here we have no pressure to shake off worth the hazard of life. Man rises only against the pressures laid on him by man:

he never wars against fortune, circumstance, and the nature of things."

"But revolutions—" interrupted some one.

"What's in a name?" retorted Sheridan. "They belong to the land of Bastilles. They can have no ground for the sole of their feet in a country of laws. I am a political optimist, in spite of Voltaire; or I agree with a better man and a greater poet—'All's well that ends well.'"

The prince looked grave, and significantly asked, "Whether too high a present price might not be paid for prospective good?"

Sheridan turned off the question with a smile. "The man who has as little to pay as I have," said he, "may seldom think of price, one way or the other."

The prince soon after rose from table, and led the way into the library, where we spent some time in looking over an exquisite collection of drawings of Greece and Albania, a present from the Prussian king to his Royal Highness. The windows were thrown open, and the fresh scents of the flower garden were sweet and soothing, the night was calm, and the moon gleamed far over the quiet ocean.

At this moment a soft sound of music arose at a distance. I looked in vain for the musicians; none were visible. The strain, tastefully managed, now approached, now receded, now seemed to ascend from the sea, now to stoop from the sky.

The private band, stationed in one of the thickets, had been the magicians. Supper was laid in this handsome apartment, perfectly simple, perfectly elegant. And thus closed my first day in the "exclusive world."

On the next evening I had exchanged fresh breezes and bright skies for the sullen atmosphere and perpetual smoke of the great city, stars for lamps, and the gentle murmurs of the tide for the turbid rush and heavy roar of the million of London. Mordecai consulted nothing but his tablets, and was evidently plunged in some huge financial speculation. He dropped me at an hotel in St. James's, and hurried towards his den in the depths of the city, like a bat to its cave.

But an English hotel is a cure for most of the sorrows of

English life. I was beginning to sink into that easy oblivion of the rubs of life which, without actual sleep, has all the placid enjoyment of slumber, when a voice pronounced my name, and I was startled and half suffocated by the embrace of a figure who rushed from an opposite box, and, in a torrent of French, poured out a torrent of raptures on my arriving in London.

When I contrived at last to disengage myself, I saw Lafontaine; but so hollow-cheeked and pale-visaged that I could scarcely recognize my showy friend in the skeleton knight who stood gesticulating his happiness before me.

At length he drew, with a trembling touch and a glistening eye, from his bosom a letter, which he placed in my hand with a squeeze of eternal friendship. "Read," said he, "read, and then wonder, if you can, at my misery and my gratitude." The letter was from Mariamne, and certainly a very pretty one—gay and tender at once; gracefully alluding to some little fretfulness on her part, or his, I could scarcely tell which; but assuring him that all this was at an end—that she forswore the world henceforth, and was quite his own.

I should have been glad to see him at any time, but now I received him as a resource from solitude.

It was clear, from her correspondence, that his pretty Jewess had played him much as the angler plays the trout which he has secured on his hook. She evidently enjoyed the display of her skill in tormenting; every second letter was almost a declaration of breaking off the correspondence altogether; or, what was even worse, there were passing references to my opinions, and quotations of my chance remarks, which, rather to my surprise, showed me that the proverb, "*Les absens ont toujours tort*," was true in more senses than one, and that the Frenchman occasionally lost ground by being fifty miles off. Once or twice it seemed to me that the little "betrothed" was evidently thinking of the error of precipitate vows, and was beginning to change her mind.

All this was quite as it should be; but the envelope contained an enormous postscript, of which I happened to be the theme. After speaking of me and my prospects in life,

with an interest which reached at least to the full amount of friendship, the subject of my reveries came on the *tapis*. "My father and Mr. Marston are on the point of going to town," said the postscript; "the latter to dream of Mademoiselle De Tourville, without the smallest hope of ever obtaining her hand."

CHAPTER X.

THE trampling of cavalry and the sound of carriages prevented my attempting the solution—at least for that sitting. All the guests crowded to the door. "His Majesty was going to Drury-lane!" It was a performance "by command." The never-failing pulse in the foreign heart was touched. Lafontaine crushed his correspondence into his bosom, sprang up from the table, wiped his eyes of all their sorrows, and proposed that we should see the display. A coach was sent for, and by a double fee we contrived to reach the stately entrance just as the troopers were brushing away the mob from the steps, and the trumpets were outringing the cries of the orange-women.

By another bribe we contrived to make our way into a box whose doors were more unrelenting than brass or marble to the crowd in the lobby; and I had my first view of national loyalty in the handsomest theatre which I have ever seen.

We had galloped to some purpose, for we had distanced the monarch and his eight carriages. The royal party had not yet entered the house; and I enjoyed, for a few minutes, one of the most striking displays that the opulence and animation of a great country can produce—the *coup d'œil* of a well-dressed audience, in a fine and spacious theatre. The times were anxious. The nation was avowedly on the eve of a struggle of which no human foresight could discover the termination. The presence of the king was the presence of the monarchy; the presence of the assemblage was the presence of the nation; the house was only a levee on a larger scale; and the crowd, composed as it was of the most distinguished individuals of the country

—the ministers, the peerage, the heads of the legislature—the whole completed by an immense mass of the middle order, gave a striking and admirable representation of the power and feelings of the empire.

At length the sound of the trumpets was heard, the door of the royal box was thrown open, and "God save the King" began. Noble as is this first of national songs, it had, at that period, a still higher meaning. It was more than an honourable and rejoicing welcome of a popular king. It was a national pledge to the throne—a proud declaration of public principle—a triumphant defiance of the enemy and the earth, in the attempt to shake the stability of a British throne, or subdue the hearts of a British people.

The king advanced to the front of the box, and bowed, in return to the general plaudits. It was the first time that I had seen George III., and I was equally struck with the stateliness of his figure and the kindliness of his countenance. Combined, they perfectly realized all that I had conceived of a monarch to whose steadiness of determination and sincerity of good-will the empire had been already indebted in periods of dangerous faction and foreign hostility.

But, as I glanced around for a moment to see the effect on the house, which was thundering with applause, I observed a slight confusion, like a personal quarrel, in the pit, and at the next instant saw a hand raised above the crowd, and a pistol fired in the direction of the royal box. The king started back a pace or two, and the general apprehension that he had been struck produced a loud cry of horror. He evidently understood the public feeling, and instantly coming forward, by a bow, and with his hand on his heart, assured them of his gratitude and his safety. This bold and graceful act was acknowledged by a shout of universal congratulation; and many a bright eye, and many a manly one too, streamed with tears. In the midst of all, the queen and the royal family rushed into the box, flung themselves round the king, and all was embracing, fainting, and terror. Cries for the seizure of the assassin now resounded on every side. He was grasped by a hundred hands, and torn out of the house. Then the universal

voice demanded "God save the King" once more; the performers came forward, and the national chaunt, now almost elevated into a hymn, was sung by the audience, with a solemnity scarcely less than an act of devotion. All the powers of the stage never furnished a more touching, perhaps a more sublime scene, than the simple reality of the whole occurrence before my eyes.

But at length the tumult sank; the order of the theatre was resumed; and the curtain rose, displaying a remarkably fine view of Roman architecture, a vista of temples and palaces—the opening scene of "Coriolanus."

The fame of the admirable actor who played the leading character was then at its height; and John Kemble shared with his splendid sister the honour of being the twin leaders of the theatrical galaxy. But I speak to a generation which have never seen either Siddons or Kemble, and will probably never see their equals.

Kemble was, at that time, in the prime of his powers; his features strongly resembling those of Siddons, and his form the perfection of heroic grace and kingly grandeur. His voice was his failing point; it was hollow and interrupted, yet its tone was naturally sweet, and it could, at times, swell to the highest storm of passion. In later days he seemed to take a strange pride in feebleness, and, in his voice and his person, affected old age. But, when I saw him first, he was all force, one of the handsomest of human beings, and, beyond all comparison, the most accomplished "classic" actor that ever realized the form and feelings of the classic age.

While I followed, with eye and mind, the movements of the stage, Lafontaine was otherwise employed. His opera-glass was roving the boxes, and he continually poured into my most ungrateful ear remarks on the diplomatic body, and recognitions of the *merveilleux* glittering round the circle. At last I turned to beg of him to be silent, when he simply said, "La voilà!" and pointed to a group which had just taken their seats in one of the private boxes. From that time I saw no more of the tragedy. The party consisted of Clotilde, Madame la Maréchale, and a stern but stately-looking man, in a rich uniform, who paid them the most marked attention.

"There is the marquis," said my companion; "he has never smiled, probably, since he was born, or I suppose he would smile to-night; for the secretary to the embassy told me, not half an hour ago, that his marriage contract had just come over with the king's signature."

My heart sank within me at the sound. Still my gay informant went on, without concerning himself about my feelings. "The match will be a capital one, if matters hold out for us, for Montrecour is one of the largest proprietors in France, while, as he is rather of the new noblesse, the blood of the De Tourvilles will be of considerable service to his pedigree. His new uniform shows me that he has got the colonelcy of my regiment; and, of course, I must attend his levee to-morrow. Will you come?"

My look was a sufficient answer. "Ah!" said he, "you will not. Ah! there is exactly the national difference between us. Marriage opens the world to a French *belle* as much as it shuts the world to an English one. Mademoiselle *is* certainly very handsome," said he, pausing, and fixing his opera-glass on her. "The contour of her countenance is positively fine: it reminds me of a picture of Clairon in 'Medea,' in the king's private apartments—her smile charming, her eyes brilliant, and her diamonds—they *are* perfect."

I listened, without daring to lift my eyes; he rambled on —"Fortunate fellow the marquis—fortunate in everything but that intolerable physiognomy of his—Grand Ecuyer, Gold Key, Cross of St. Louis, and on the point of being the husband of the finest woman between Calais and Constantinople. I must pay my respects to my colonel. I dare say you may do the same to the *fiancée*. Mademoiselle will, doubtless, be charmed to have some interruption to his dreary attentions."

I again refused, but the gay Frenchman was not to be so repulsed. He made a prodigious bow to the box, which was acknowledged by both the ladies. "There," said he, "the affair is settled. You cannot possibly hesitate now; that bow is a summons to their box."

I dared resist no longer, but with sensations perhaps not unlike those of one ascending the scaffold, I mounted

the stairs. As the door opened, and Lafontaine, tripping forward, announced my name, Clotilde's cheek wore a burning blush, which at the next instant passed away, and left her pale as marble. The few words of introduction over, she sank into total silence, and though she made an effort, from time to time, to smile at Lafontaine's frivolities, it was but a feeble one. I attempted to take some share in the conversation, but my tongue refused to utter, and I remained the most complete and unfortunate contrast to my lively friend. My nearer view of the marquis did not improve the sketch which Lafontaine had given of his commanding officer. He was a tall and stiff, though soldierly-looking person, with an expression which, as one was disposed to approve or the reverse, might be called strong sense or sullenness of temper. But he had some reputation in the service as a bold, if not an able officer, and as his loyalty was not merely known, but violent, and his hatred of the new faction in France was not merely determined, but furious, he was regarded as one of the pillars of the royal cause. The marquis was evidently in ill-humour, yet it was too early for a matrimonial quarrel, and too late for a lover's one. Clotilde was as evidently unhappy, and after a few common-places we took our leave; the marquis himself condescending to start from his seat, and shut the door upon our parting bow. The stage had now lost all interest for me, and I prevailed on Lafontaine, much against his will, to leave the house. The lobby was crowded; we reached the door only just in time to see Montrecour escorting the ladies to their carriage.

All was now over for the night, when a flourish of trumpets and drums announced that their Majesties were leaving the theatre. The Life-guards rode up; and the pressure of the crowd, the crash of the carriages, produced a scene of uproar. My first thought was the hazard of Clotilde, and I hastened to the spot where I had seen her; but she was gone.

"All's safe, you see," said Lafontaine, trying to compose his ruffled costume; "your John Bulls are dangerous, in their loyalty, to coats and carriages." I agreed with him, and we sprang into one of the wretched hackney coaches. But our adventures were not to close so simply. Our

driver had not remained in the rain for hours without applying to the national remedy against all inclemencies of weather. He had no sooner mounted the box than I found that we were running a race with every carriage which we approached, sometimes tilting against them, and sometimes narrowly escaping being overturned. At last we met with an antagonist worthy of our prowess. All my efforts to stop our charioteer had been useless, for he was beyond any kind of appeal but that of flinging him from his seat; and Lafontaine, with the genuine fondness of a Gaul for excitement of all kinds, seemed wonderfully amused as we swept along. But our new rival was evidently in the same condition with our own Jehu; and after a smart horsewhipping of each other, they again rushed forward at full speed. A sudden scream from within the other carriage showed the terror of its inmates, as it dashed along; an old woman in full dress, however, was all that I could discover; for we were fairly distanced in the race, though it was still kept up with all the perseverance of fools thoroughly intoxicated. In a few minutes more, we heard a tremendous collision in front, and saw by the blaze of half a hundred flambeaux our rival a complete wreck, plunged into the midst of a crowd of equipages waiting for their lordly owners in front of H—— House.

Arriving with almost equal rapidity, but with better fortune, I had but just time to bound into the street at the instant when the old lady writhed herself out of the window. I caught her as she clung to the carriage with her many-braceleted arms, and was almost strangled with the vigour of her involuntary embrace as she rolled down upon me.

But I was relieved from the laughter of the liveried mob round me, and probably from figuring in the police histories of the morning, by the extreme terrors of the lady for the fate of her daughter. The carriage had by this time been raised up, but its other inmate was not to be found. She now produced her purse, and offered its contents to all who should bring any tidings of her daughter, her lost child, her Clotilde! The name thrilled on my ear. I flew off, to renew the search, followed by the crowd—was unsuccessful, and returned, only to see my *protégée* in

strong hysterics. My situation now became embarrassing, when a way was made through the crowd by a highly-powdered personage, the chamberlain of the mansion, who announced himself as sent by "her grace" to say that the Countess de Tourville was safe, having been taken into the house; and, further, conveying "her grace's compliments to Madame la Maréchale de Tourville, to entreat that she would do her the honour to join her daughter." This message, delivered with all the pomp of a "gentleman of the bedchamber," produced its immediate effect upon the circle of cocked hats and worsted epaulettes, and guided by Townshend, who moved on, hat in hand, and bowing with the obsequiousness of one escorting a prince of the blood, I reached the door of the mansion.

But here a new difficulty arose. The duchess was known to La Maréchale, for to whom in misfortune was not that most generous and kind-hearted duchess known? But *I* was still a stranger. However, with my old Frenchwoman, ceremony was not then the prevailing point. *I* had been her "preserver," as she was pleased to term me. "I spoke French like a Parisian;" in short, it was wholly impossible for her to ascend the crowded staircase, with her numberless dislocations, by the help of any other arm on earth. The slightest hope of seeing Clotilde would have made me confront all the etiquette of Spain; and I bore the contrast of my undress costume with the feathered and silken multitude which filled the stairs, in the spirit of a philosopher, until, by "many a step and slow," we reached the private wing of the mansion.

There, in an apartment fitted up with all the luxury of a boudoir, yet looking melancholy, from the dim lights and the silent attendants, lay Clotilde on a sofa. But how changed from the brilliant being whom I had just seen at the theatre! She had been in imminent danger, and was literally dragged from under the horse's feet. A slight wound in her temple was still bleeding, and her livid lips and half-closed eyes gave me the image of death. As for Madame *Mère*, she was distraction; the volubility of her sorrows made the well-trained domestics shrink as from a display at which they ought not to be present; and at length the only recipients of her woes were myself and

the physician, who, with ominous visage, and drops in hand, was administering his aid to the passive patient. Madame's despair rendering her wholly useless, the doctor called on me to assist him in raising her from the floor, on which she had flung herself like a heroine in tragedy.

While I was engaged in this most reluctant performance, the accents of a sweet voice, and the rustling of silk, made me raise my eyes, and a vision floated across the apartment; it was the duchess herself, glittering in gold and jewels, turbaned and embroidered. She had just left the fancy ball behind, and was come—"to make her personal inquiries for the health of her young friend."

I might have figured in her eyes as the husband, or the lover, or the doctor's apprentice; she almost uttered a scream. But the sound, slight as it was, recalled the Maréchale to her senses. Her explanation was given with promptitude, and received with politeness. My family, in all its branches, came to her grace's quick recollection; and I was thus indebted to my adventure for an introduction to one of the most elegant women of her time—to the goddess of fashion in her very temple. A summons from the ball-room soon withdrew the captivating mistress of the mansion, who retired with the step and glance of the queen of courtesy; and I was about to take my leave, when a ceremonial of still higher interest awaited me. Clotilde, feebly rising from the sofa, and sustaining herself on the neck of her kneeling mother, murmured her thanks to me "for the preservation of her dear parent." The fair object before me shed no tears, but, with her eyes half closed, and looking the marble model of paleness and beauty, she held out her hand. She was, perhaps, unconscious of offering more than a simple testimony of her gratitude for the services which her mother had described with such needless eloquence. But in that delicious, yet unaccountable feeling—that superstition of the heart, which makes everything eventful—even that simple pressure of her hand created a long and living future in my mind.

Yet let me do myself justice; whether wise or weak in the presence of the only being who had ever mastered my feelings, I was determined not "to point a moral and adorn a tale." I had other duties and other

purposes before me than to degenerate into a slave of sighs.

I loved; but it was not with the sickly sentiment which flies to listlessness, and turns the day into visions. To obtain honour, wealth, a name, and lay them all at the feet of the one idol, was the solemn resolution as it was the animating hope of my life: and this was the time of times.

I saw the hourly operations of that mighty furnace in which the fortunes of all nations were mingled, to be poured forth remoulded. And London itself was never more alive. Every journal which I took up was filled with the signs of this extraordinary energy; with the projects and meetings, the harangues and political experiments, of bold men. The debates in parliament, never more vivid than at this crisis, with the two great parties in full force, and throwing out flashes at every movement like the collision of thunder-clouds, were a perpetual summons to action, in every breast which felt itself above the dust it trod. But the French journals were the still wilder excitements to political ardour. They were more than lamps, guiding mankind along the dusky paths of public regeneration—they were torches, dazzling the multitude who attempted to profit by their light, and, while they threw a glare round the head of the march, blinding all who followed.

Even the brief interval of my Brighton visit had curiously changed the aspect of the metropolis. The emigration was now in full tide, and every spot was crowded with foreign visages. Sallow cheeks and starting eyes, scowling brows and fierce moustaches, were the order of the day; the monks and the military had run off together. The English language was almost overwhelmed by the perpetual jargon of all the loud-tongued provincialities of France. But the most singular portion was the ecclesiastical; the streets and parks were filled with the unlucky sheep of the Gallican church, scattered before the teeth and howl of the republican wolf. England, to her utter astonishment, saw, for the first time, the secrets of the monastery poured out before the light of day. The appearance of some among this sable multitude, though venerable

and dignified, could not prevent the singularity of the others from having its effect on the spectator. The monks and priesthood of France amounted to little less than a hundred and fifty thousand. All were now thrown up from the darkness of centuries before a wondering world.

Monkism was broken up, like a ship dashed against the iron shores of Biscay. The ship was not only wrecked, but all its fragments continued to be tossed on the ceaseless surge. The Gallican church was flung loose over Europe, at a time when all Europe itself was in commotion. I own, to the discredit of my political foresight, that I thought it extinguished for ever. The monk was more tenacious of life than I had dreamed. But if I erred I did not err alone.

Mordecai, whom I found immersed deeper and deeper in continental politics, gave me his opinion of this strange portion of French society, with much more promptitude than he might of the probable fall or rise of stocks.

"Of all the gamblers at the great gambling-table of France," said he, "the clergy have played their game the worst. By leaving their defence to the throne, they have only dragged down the throne. By relying on the good sense of the National Assembly, they have left themselves without a syllable to say. Like men pleading by counsel, they have been at the mercy of their counsel, and they have been ruined at once by weakness and by treachery."

From the Horse Guards I had yet obtained nothing, but promises of "being remembered on the first vacancy;" Clotilde was still a sufferer; and my time, like that of every man without an object, began to be a burden. My early prospect of laurels was fairly vanishing hour by hour. I occasionally met Lafontaine; even he, too, had his fluctuations; and a letter from Mariamne, a little more or less petulant, raised and sank him like the spirit in a thermometer.

But one day he rushed into my apartment with a look of that despair which only foreigners can assume. Flinging himself into a chair, he held a paper to me. "Read!" he exclaimed, with the most pathetic tones of Talma in tragedy

—"read my ruin!" I read, and found that it was a letter from his domineering little Jewess, commanding him to throw up his commission on the spot, and especially "not to visit France, on penalty of her eternal displeasure." My looks asked an explanation.

He then let me into his own secret, with an occasional episode of the secrets of others—the substance of the whole being, that a counter-revolution was preparing in France; that, after conducting the correspondence in London for some time, he had been ordered to carry a despatch, of the highest importance, to the secret agency in Paris; and that the question was now between love and honour.

While he alternately raved and wept, the thought struck me, "Why might not I go in his place?" I was growing weary of the world, however little I knew of it. The only being for whom I wished to live was lost to me already. I offered myself as the carrier of the despatch without delay.

I never saw ecstasy so visible in a human being; his eloquence exhausted the whole vocabulary of national rapture. But when I attempted to escape from this overflow of gratitude, by observing on the very simple nature of the service, his recollection returned, and he generously endeavoured, with equal zeal, to dissuade me from an enterprise of which the perils were certainly neither few nor trifling. After debating the matter long, without producing conviction on either side, it was finally agreed to refer the question to Mordecai, whom Lafontaine now formally acknowledged to be master of the secret on both sides of the Channel.

CHAPTER XI.

I FOUND the Jew in his den, as usual, and communicated my object to the man of business. To my surprise, and, I must own, a little to the chagrin of my vanity, he made no opposition to it whatever. I afterwards ascertained that, on the day before, he had received a proposal of marriage for his daughter from a German millionnaire of his own line.

"You are perfectly right," said he, "in desiring to see the Continent; and in Paris you will find the Continent all gathered into a glance. A person with whom I have had

occasional business in Downing-street, has applied to me to name an individual in my confidence, as an *attaché* to our embassy in France—though, be it understood, without a public appointment."

I started at this dubious diplomacy.

"This," said he, "only shows that you have still to learn the trade. Let me then tell you that it is by such persons that all the real work of diplomacy is carried on. Can you suppose that the perfumed and polished young gentlemen who, under the name of secretaries and sub-secretaries, superior and inferior *attachés*, and so forth, haunt the hotels of the embassy, are the real instruments? It is true they are necessary to the dinners and balls of the embassy. They are also useful to drive out the ambassador's horses to air, escort his wife, and dance with his daughters. But the business is uniformly done by somebody of whom nobody knows anything but that he is never seen loitering about the ambassador's drawing-room, though he has the *entrée* of his closet, and that he never makes charades, though he corresponds from day to day with the government at home. Of course you will accept the appointment—and now let me give you your credentials."

He unlocked a cabinet, and at last he found the roll of papers which he sought; and having first thrown a glance round the room, as if a spy sat on every chair, he began to unroll them with a rapid criticism on each, as the first few lines met his eye. Every nerve of his countenance was in full play while he looked over those specimens of the wisdom of the wise. He would have been an invaluable study to a Lavater. "Here I have the paper," said he, "and I must immediately send you back to the secretary's office. But there you must not be known. Secresy is essential to your mission, even to your life. In Paris, stabbing has grown common, and the knowledge that you had any other purpose than gambling might be repaid by a poniard."

He now prepared his note, and as he wrote, continued his conversation, in fragments. "Three-fourths of mankind are mere blunderers, and the more you know of them, the more you will be of my opinion. I am by no means sure that we have not some of them in Whitehall itself. Pitt is a power-

ful man, and he alone keeps them together; without him they would be potsherds. Pitt thinks that we can go on without a war: he is mistaken. How is it possible to keep Europe in peace when the Continent is as rotten as thatch, and France as combustible as gunpowder? France governed by fools is nothing. But if she shall ever have an able man at her head, she will realize old Frederick's opinion."

As no time was to be lost, I hastened, with my note of introduction, to Whitehall, and was ushered through a succession of dingy offices into a small chamber, where I found a young man of a heavy yet not unintelligent countenance. He read my note, rang his bell, and handed me a small packet, endorsed—*most secret and confidential.* He then made the most awkward of bows; and our interview was at an end. I afterwards saw this man prime minister.

Till now the interest of my new purpose had kept me in excitement; but I found, to my surprise, my spirits suddenly flag, and a dejection wholly unaccountable seize upon me. It was a general, undefined feeling of having undertaken a task too difficult for my powers, of having incurred an overwhelming responsibility, of having desperately engaged myself in a service in which I could neither advance with hope nor retreat with honour.

After a week of this feverish fluctuation, I received a note, saying that I must leave London at midnight.

I strayed involuntarily towards H—— House. It was one of its state dinner days, and the street rang with the incessant setting down of the guests. As I passed through the crowd, Lafontaine stood before me. He was in uniform, and looked showily. He was to be one of the party, and his manner had all the animation which scenes of this order naturally excite in those with whom the world goes well. But my countenance evidently startled him, and he attempted to offer such consolation as was to be found in telling me that if La Comtesse was visible, he should not fail to tell her of the noble manner in which I had volunteered, and the happiness which I had thus secured to him and Mariamne. "You may rely on it," said he, "that I shall make her sick of Monsieur le Marquis and his sulky physiognomy. I shall dance with her,

I shall talk to her, and you shall be the subject as you so well deserve."

"But her marriage is inevitable," was my sole answer.

"Oh, true; inevitable! But that makes no possible difference. You cannot marry all the women you may admire, nor they you."

The sound of a neighbouring church clock broke off our dialogue. He took out his diamond watch, compared it with the time, found that to delay a moment longer would be a solecism, which might lose him a smile or be punished with a frown; repeated a couplet on the pangs of parting with friends; and with an embrace, in the most glowing style of Paris, bounded across the street, and was lost in the crowd which blocked up her grace's portal.

Thus parted the gay lieutenant and myself; he to float along the tide of fashion in its most sparkling current—I to tread the twilight paths of the "Green Park," in helplessness and heaviness of soul.

This interview had not the more reconciled me to life. I was vexed with what I regarded as the nonchalance of my friend, and began to wish that I had left him to go through with his own affairs as he might. But reflection did justice to his gallant spirit, and I mentally thanked him for having relieved me from the life of an idler. I heard a rapid step, and my name pronounced by a familiar voice; it was Mordecai's. He had brought me some additional letters to the leaders of the party in Paris.

We returned to the hotel, and sat down to our final meal together. When the lights were brought in, I saw that he looked at me with some degree of surprise, and even of alarm. "You are ill," said he; "the life of London is too much for you. There are but three things that constitute health in this world—air, exercise, and employment." I acknowledged to him my misgivings as to my fitness for the mission. But he was a man of the world. He asked me, "Do you desire to resign? If so, I have the power to revoke it at this moment."

The alternative was now plainly before me; and, stern as was the nature of the Israelite, I saw evidently that he would be gratified by my abandoning the project. But this was suddenly out of the question. The mission, to

escape which, in the half-hour before I should have gladly given up every shilling I ever hoped to possess, was at once fixed in my mind as a peculiar bounty of fortune. There are periods in the human heart like those which we observe in nature—the atmosphere brightens by the tempest. The struggle which had shaken me so long had now passed away, and things assumed as new and distinct an aspect as a hill or a forest in the distance might on the passing away of a cloud. Mordecai argued against my enthusiasm; but when was enthusiasm ever outargued? I drove him, horse and foot, from the field. I did more; enthusiasm is contagious—I made him my convert.

"Whether you are fit for a politician," said he, "I cannot tell; for the trade is of a mingled web, and has its rough side as well as its smooth one. But, young as you are, and old as I am, there are some notions in which we do not differ so much as in our years. I have long seen that the world was about to undergo some extraordinary change. That it should ever come from the rabble of Paris, I must confess, had not entered into my mind; I might have understood it had it come from John Bull. But I have lived in France, and I never expected anything from the people. If France shall have a revolution it will be as much a matter of mechanism, of show, and of holiday, as the '*grand jet d'eau.*'" Yet even he was mistaken. We ended with a parting health to Mariamne, and his promise to attend to my interests at the Horse Guards, on which I was still strongly bent. The Jew was clearly no sentimentalist; but the glass of wine, and the few words of civility and recollection with which I had devoted it to his pretty daughter, evidently touched the father's heart. He lingered on the steps of the hotel, and still held my hand. "You shall not," said he, "be the worse for your good wishes, nor for that glass of wine. You have a bold, ay, and a broad career before you. One thing I shall tell you. We shall certainly have war. The Government here are blind to it. Even the prime minister—and there is not a more sagacious mind on the face of the earth—is inclined to think that it may be averted. But I tell you, as the first secret which you may insert in your despatches, that

it will come, and when it does it will be sudden, desperate, and universal. You may tell the minister, or the world, that you had it from Mordecai. I lay on you only one injunction—that you shall not mention it within a week. I have received it from our brethren on the Continent as a matter of business. I give it to you here as a flourish for your first essay in diplomacy."

He drew out another letter. "This," said he, "is from my daughter. Before you come among us again, she will probably be the wife of one of our nation, and that one the richest among us. But she still values you as the preserver of her life, and sends you a letter to one of our most intimate friends in Paris. Now farewell!" He turned away.

I sprang into the post-chaise, in which was already seated a French courier with despatches from his minister, whose attendance the Jew had secured to lighten the first inconveniences to a young traveller.

My mind was still in a whirl as rapid as my wheels. Hope, doubt, and determination passed through my brain in quick succession; yet there was one thought that came, like Shakspeare's "delicate spirit," in all the tumult of soul, of which, like Ariel in the storm, it was the chief cause, to soothe and subdue me. Hastily as I had driven from the door of my hotel, I had time to cast my eye along the front of H—— House. All the windows of its principal apartments shone with almost noonday brightness; uniforms glittered, and plumes waved, in the momentary view. But in the range above all was dark, except one window—the window of the boudoir—and there the light was of the dim and melancholy hue which instinctively gives the impression of the sick-chamber. Was Clotilde still there, feebly counting the hours of pain, while all within her hearing was festivity? But were we not separated already? If she recovered, must she not be in the power of a task-master? If she sank under her feebleness, what was earth to me?

In those reveries I passed the hours until daybreak, when the sun and the sea rose together on my wearied eyes.

The bustle of Dover aroused me to a sense of the world.

All was animation on sea and shore. The emigration was now in full flow, and France was pouring down her terrified thousands on the nearest coast. The harbour was crowded with vessels of every kind, which had just disgorged themselves of their living cargoes; the streets were blocked up with foreign carriages; the foreign population had completely overpowered the native; and the town swarmed with strangers of every rank and dress, all with the hurried look of escaped fugitives.

Three hours carried me to the French shore. Free from all the vulgar vexations of the road, I had the full enjoyment of one of the most pleasant of all enjoyments—moving at one's ease through a new and interesting country. The road to Paris is now like the road to Windsor, to all the higher portions of my countrymen; but then it was much less known even to them than in later days, and the circumstances of the time gave it a totally new character. The landscape had literally the look of war; troops were encamped in the neighbourhood of the principal towns; the National Guards were exercising in the fields; mimic processions of children were beating drums and displaying banners in the streets; and the popular songs were all for the conquest of everything beneath the moon.

But I shall never forget the mixture of wonder and awe which I felt at the first distant sight of the capital.

It was at the close of a long day's journey, while the twilight gave a mysterious hue to a scene in itself singular and stately. Glistening spire on spire; massive piles, which in the deepening haze might seem either prisons or palaces; vast ranges of buildings, gloomy or glittering as the partial ray fell on them; with the solemn beauty of the Invalides on one wing, the light and lovely elegance of St. Genevieve on the other, and the frowning majesty of Notre Dame in the midst,—all filling the plain with a vision such as I had imaged only in an Arabian tale. Yet the moral reality was even greater than the visible. I felt that I was within reach of the chief seat of all the leading events of the Continent since the birth of monarchy: every step which I might tread among those piles was historical; within that clouded circumference, like the circle of a necromancer, had been raised all the dazzling and all the disturbing spi

rits of the world. There was the grand display of statesmanship, pomp, ambition, pleasure, and each of the most subtle, splendid, daring, and prodigal species ever seen among men. The monarchy was falling—but was not the space, cleared of its ruins, to be filled up by some new structure, statelier still? Or, if the government of the Bourbons were to sink for ever from the eyes of men, were there to be no discoveries made in the gulf itself in which it went down?

There are moments on which the destiny of a nation, perhaps of an age, turns. I had reached Paris at one of those moments. As my *calèche* wound its slow way round the base of Montmartre, I perceived, through the deepening twilight, a long train of flame, spreading from the horizon to the gates of the city. Shouts were heard, with now and then the heavy sounds of cannon. My postilion stoutly protested against venturing his *calèche*, his horses, and, what he probably regarded much more than either, himself, into the very heart of what he pronounced a counter-revolution. My courier, freighted with despatches which might have been high treason to the majesty of the mob, and who saw nothing less than suspension from the first lamp-post in their discovery, protested, with about the same number of *sacres;* and my diplomatic beams seemed in a fair way to be shorn.

But this was the actual sight which I had come to see—Paris in its new existence; the capital of the populace; the head-quarters of the grand army of insurgency; the living centre of all those flashes of fantasy, fury, and fire, which were already darting out towards every throne of Europe. I determined to have a voice on the occasion, and I exerted it with such vigour that I roused the inmates of a block-house, a party of the National Guard, who, early as it was, had been as fast asleep as if they had been a *posse* of city watchmen. They clustered round us, applauded my resolve to see what was to be seen as perfectly national, *vraiment Français;* kicked my postilion till he mounted his horse, beat my sulky courier with the flats of their little swords, and would have bastinadoed, or probably hanged him, if I had not interposed; and, finally, hoisting me into the *calèche*, which they loaded with half a dozen of their number before

and behind, commenced our march into Paris. This was evidently not the age of discipline.

It may have been owing to this curious escort that I got in at all; for at the gate I found a strong guard of the regular troops, who drove back a long succession of carriages which had preceded me. But my *cortège* were so thoroughly in the new fashion, they danced the "*carmagnole*" so boisterously, and sang patriotic rhymes with such strength of lungs, that it was impossible to refuse admission to patriots of such sonorousness.

As we advanced through the streets, my noisy "*compagnons de voyage*" dropped off one by one, some to the lowest places of entertainment, and some tired of the jest; and I proceeded to the Place de Vendôme, to look for my hotel at my leisure. The streets were now solitary, to a degree that was almost startling. As I wound my way through long lines of houses, tortuous, narrow, and dark as Erebus, I saw the cause of the singular success which had attended all Parisian insurrections. A chain across one of these dismal streets, an overturned cart, a pile of stones, would convert it at once into an impassable defile. Walls and windows, massive, lofty, and nearly touching each other from above, afforded a perpetual fortification; lanes innumerable, and extending from one depth of darkness and intricacy into another, a network of attack and ambush, obviously gave an extraordinary advantage to the irregular daring of men accustomed to thread those wretched and dismal dens, crowded with one of the fiercest and most capricious populations in the world.

But, on turning into the Boulevards, the scene changed, with the rapidity of magic. Before me were raging thousands, the multitude which I had seen advancing to the gates. The houses, as far as the eye could reach, were lighted up with lamps, torches, and every sort of hurried illumination. Banners of all hues were waving from the casements, or borne along by the people; and in the midst of the wild procession were seen at a distance a train of travelling carriages, loaded on the roofs with the basest of the rabble. A mixed crowd of National Guards, covered with dust, and drooping under the fatigue of the road; *poissardes* drunk, dancing, and screaming the most horrid blasphemies; and

a still wider circle, which seemed to me recruited from all the gaols of Paris, surrounded the carriages, which I at length understood to be those of the royal family. They had attempted to escape to the frontier, had been arrested, and were now returning as prisoners. I caught a glimpse, by the torchlight, of the illustrious sufferers, as they passed the spot where I stood.

At the moment when the carriages were passing, an incident occurred, terribly characteristic of the time. A man of noble presence, and with the order of St. Louis on his breast, excited by sudden feeling, rushed forward through the escort, and laying one hand on the royal carriage, with the other waved his hat, and shouted, "Vive le Roi!" In another instant I saw him stagger; a pike had been darted into his bosom, and he fell dead under the wheel. Before the confusion of this frightful catastrophe had subsided, a casement was opened immediately above my head, and a woman, superbly dressed, rushed out on the balcony, waving a white scarf, and crying, "Vive Marie Antoinette!" The muskets of the escort were turned upon her, and a volley was fired at the balcony. She started back at the shock, and a long gush of blood down her white robe showed that she had been wounded. But she again waved the scarf, and again uttered the loyal cry. Successive shots were fired at her by the monsters beneath; but she still stood. At length she received the mortal blow; she tottered and fell, yet, still clinging to the front of the balcony, she waved the scarf, and constantly attempted to pronounce the words of her generous and devoted heart, until she expired!

CHAPTER XII.

The Revolution was like the tiger; it advanced couching, though, when it sprang, its bound was sudden and irresistible. My time was occupied in official functions, which became constantly more important, and of which I received flattering opinions from Downing-street. I mingled extensively in general society, and it was never more animated or more characteristic than at that period

in Paris. The leaders of faction and the leaders of fashion, classes so different in every other part of the world, were there often the same. The woman who dazzled the ball-room, was frequently the *confidante* of the deepest designs of party. The coterie in a *salon* covered with gilding, and filled with *chefs d'œuvre* of the arts, was often as subtle as a conspiracy in the cells of the Jacobins; and the dance or the masquerade was only the preliminary to an outbreak which shattered a ministry into fragments. All the remarkable men of France passed before me, and I acknowledge that I was frequently delighted and surprised by their extraordinary attainments. The age of the *Encyclopédie* was in its wane, but some of its brilliant names still illustrated the Parisian *salons*. Even the mixture of society which had been created by the Revolution, gave an original force and freshness to these assemblies, infinitely more attractive than the elaborate polish of the old *régime*. Brissot, once a common printer, but a man of singular force of language, there figured by Condorcet, the noble, and the man of profound science. St. Etienne, the little bustling partizan, mingled with the chief advocates of the Parisian courts; or Servan fenced, with his subtle knowledge of the world, against Vergniaud, the romantic Girondist, but the most Ciceronian of orators. Talleyrand, already known as the most sarcastic of men, and Maury, by far the most powerful debater of France since Mirabeau, figured among the chief ornaments of the *salons* of De Staël, Roland, and the splendid Theresa Cabarrus; and even the flutter of La Fayette, and the sullen sententiousness of Robespierre, then known only as a provincial deputy, furnished a background which increased the prominence of the grouping.

But the greatest wonder of France still escaped the general eye. At a ball at the Hôtel de Staël, I remember to have been struck with the energetic denunciation of some rabble insult to the royal family, by an officer whom nobody knew. As the circle were standing, in conversation on the topic of the day, the little officer started from his seat, pushed into the group, and expressed his contempt for the populace, and his scorn for the supineness of the Government on those occasions, so strongly as to turn all

eyes upon him. "Where were the troops, where the guns?" he exclaimed. "If such things are suffered, all is over with royalty; a squadron of horse, and a couple of six-pounders, would have swept away the whole swarm of scoundrels like so many flies." Having thus discharged his soul, he started back again, flung himself into a chair, and did not utter another word throughout the evening. I little dreamed that in that meagre frame, and long thin physiognomy, I saw Napoleon.

I had now been for some time in Paris, without returning, or wishing to return, to London. But I was in the centre of all that awoke, agitated, or alarmed Europe; and compared with the glow and rapidity of events in France, the rest of Europe appeared asleep, or to open its eyes solely when some new explosion shook it from its slumber.

My position, too, was a matchless school for the learner in diplomacy. France now shaped the politics of the Continent; and I was present at the furnace where the casting was performed. France was the stage to which every eye in Europe was turned, whether for its comedy or its tragedy; and I was behind the scenes. But the change was at hand.

One night I found an individual, of a very marked appearance, waiting for me at my hotel. His countenance was evidently Jewish, and he introduced himself as one of the secret police of the ministry. The man handed me a letter—it was from Mordecai, and directed to be given with the utmost secresy. It was in his usual succinct and rapid style:—

"I write this in the midst of a tumult of business. My friend Mendoza will give you such knowledge and assistance as may be necessary. France is on the point of an explosion. Everything is prepared. It is impossible that it can be delayed above a week or two, and the only cause of the delay is the determination to make the overthrow final. Acquaint your English officials with this. The monarchy of the Bourbons has signed its own death-warrant. By suffering a legislature to be formed by the votes of the multitude, it has flung all property into the power of beggars; rank has been left at the mercy of the rabble; and the church has been sacrificed to a faction. Thus the

three pillars of society have been cut away; and the throne is left in the air. Mendoza will tell you more. The train is already laid. A letter from a confidential agent tells me that the day is fixed. At all events, avoid the mine. There is no pleasure in being blown up, even in company with kings."

A postscript briefly added that his daughter sent her recollections; that Clotilde was still indisposed, Lafontaine giddier than ever; and, as the proof of his own confidence in his views, that "he had just sold out 100,000 three-per-cent. Consols."

My first visit next morning was to the British embassy. But the ambassador was absent in the country; and the functionary who had been left in charge was taking lessons on the guitar. I explained, but explained in vain. The hour was at hand "when his horses were to be at the door, for a ride in the Bois de Boulogne." I recommended a ride after the ambassador. "It was impossible. He was to be the escort of a duchess; then to go to a dinner at the Russian embassy, and was under engagements for three balls in the evening." Nothing could be clearer than that such duties must supersede the slight concerns of office.

I went, as soon as nightfall concealed my visit, to the hotel of the Foreign Minister. This was my first interview with the celebrated Dumourier.

The minister received me with the courtesy of a man of high life; and I entered on the purport of my visit at once. He was "perfectly astonished at my tidings; he had known that strong resolutions had been adopted by the party opposed to the Cabinet; but now heard, for the first time, the distinct avowal of its intention to overthrow the monarchy." I was struck with his appearance, his quickness of conception, and that mixture of sportiveness and depth which I had found characteristic of the higher orders of French society. His figure too was characteristic, undersized, but of the most muscular and active proportions; his movements were restless and eager; hand, eye, and tongue in perpetual motion; his countenance bold, but with smiling lips and a most penetrating grey eye. As a soldier he was at this period wholly unknown; but I could imagine in him

a leader equally subtle and daring;—he soon realized my conjecture.

We sat together until midnight; and over the supper-table, and cheered with the good things, he gave full flow to his spirit of communication. The Frenchman's sentences are like sabre-cuts—they have succession, but no connection.

"I shall always converse with you, M. Marston," said he, "with ease; for you are of the noblesse of your own great country, and I am tired of *roturiers* already. The government has committed dangerous faults. The king is an excellent man, but his heart is where his head ought to be, and his head where his heart. His flight was a terrible affair, but it was a blunder on both sides. Our business now is to preserve the monarchy."

I adverted to the personal character of the royal family.

"Nothing can be better. But chance has placed them in a false position. If the king were but the first prince of the blood, his benevolence without his responsibility would make him the most popular man in France. If the queen were still but the dauphiness, she would be, as she was then, all but worshipped."

"Yet can France ever forget her old allegiance, and adopt the fierce follies of a republic?"

"I think not." He mused for a moment, and then said, in a tone of strong feeling, "The fact is, that we are dealing with agencies of which we know nothing but the tremendous force. We are breathing a new atmosphere, which may at first excite, only to kill. What power of human counsel can say to the ocean in its rage, Thus far shalt thou go?"

"But, *Monsieur le Ministre*, the great institutions of France, will they not form a barrier? Is not their ancient firmness proof against the loose assaults of a populace like that of Paris?"

"Ah! how very English all that is; your countrymen never believe in the existence of danger. The loftier the superstructure the surer it is to be ultimately carried away, and to carry away with it all that mere time would have spared. The massiveness of the obstacle increases the spread of the ruin. Your monarchy is firmer. Its strength

is in its nature. It is less a vast building than a mighty tree, not fixed on foundations which can never widen, but growing from roots which continually extend."

"But the insurrection; I fear the attack on the palace," said I.

"It will not take place. Your information shall be forwarded to the court, where, however, I doubt whether it will be received with much credence. We have been unfortunately forced to send the chief part of the garrison of Paris to the frontier. But we have three battalions of the Swiss Guard within call at Courbevoie. Rely upon it, all will go well."

With this assurance I was forced to be content, but I relied much more on my Jewish intelligence. A despatch to London gave a minute of our conversation before I laid my head on the pillow.

Within twenty-four hours of this interview the ministry was dissolved. Dumourier was gone post-haste to take the command of one of the armies on the frontier, merely to save his life from the mob, and I went to bed, in the Place Vendôme, by the light of La Fayette burned in effigy in the centre of the square. So much for popularity!

At dusk, on the 9th of August, as I was sitting in a *café* at the Palais Royal, listening to the mountain songs of a party of Swiss minstrels in front of the door, Mendoza, passing through the crowd, made me a signal, and I immediately followed him to an obscure corner of one of the galleries.

"The insurrection is fixed for to-night," was his startling announcement. "At twelve by the clock of Notre Dame, all the sections will be under arms. The Jacobin club, the club of the Cordeliers, and the Faubourg St. Antoine, are the alarm-posts. The Marseillais are posted at the Cordeliers, and are to head the attack. Danton is already among them, and has published this address."

He gave me the placard. It was brief and bold:—

"Citizens,—The country is betrayed. France is in the hands of her enemies. The Austrians are advancing. Our troops are retreating, and Paris must be defended by her brave sons alone. But we have traitors in the camp. Our legislators are their accomplices, and La Fayette, the slave

of kings, has been suffered to escape—the nation must be avenged. The perfidious Louis is about to follow his example and fly, after having devoted the capital to conflagration. Delay a moment, and you will have to fight by the flames of your houses, and to bleed over the ashes of your wives and children. March, and victory is yours. To arms! To arms!! To arms!!!"

"Does Danton lead the insurrection?" was my first inquiry.

"No. A secret meeting of the heads of the party was held two days since to decide on a leader for the sections. It was difficult, and had nearly been finished by the dagger. At length an old German refugee, a beggar, but a soldier, was fixed on, and Westerman is to take the command. By one o'clock the tocsin is to be rung, and the insurgents are instantly to move from all points on the Tuileries."

"What is their object?"

"The seizure or death of the king and royal family."

"And the result of that object?"

"The proclamation of a Republic!"

"Is this known at the palace?"

"Not a syllable. All there are in perfect security—to communicate intelligence there is not in my department."

As I looked at the keen eye and dark physiognomy of my informant, there was an expression of surprise in mine at this extraordinary coolness, which saved me the trouble of asking the question.

"You doubt me," said he. "But I have been ordered by Mordecai, the chief of our tribe in England, to watch over you, and my information is a part of my obedience to the command." He suddenly darted away.

Notwithstanding the steadiness of his assertions, I had still doubted their probability, and, to examine the point for myself, I strayed towards the palace. All there was tranquil; a few lights were scattered through the galleries, but every sound of life, much less of watchfulness and preparation, was still. The only human beings in sight were some dismounted cavalry, and a battalion of the National Guard, lounging about the square. I could observe no sign of movement, no gathering of the populace; all lay silent beneath the young moon, which, near her setting,

touched the whole scene with a look of soft and almost melancholy quietude.

The sagacity of my Israelite friend began to fall rapidly in the scale, and I had made up my mind that insurrection had gone to its slumbers for the night, when, as I was returning by the *Place de Bastille*, two men suddenly started forward, and planted themselves in my way. I flung one of them aside, but the other grasped my arm, and, drawing a dagger, told me that my life was at his mercy. His companion giving a signal, a group of fierce-looking fellows started from their lurking-places, and I was ordered to follow them. I remonstrated, but in vain, and was finally led, through a labyrinth of horrid alleys, to what I now found to be the head-quarters of the insurrection.

It was an immense building, which had probably been a manufactory, but was now filled with the arms and leaders of the mob. The few torches, which were its only light, and which scarcely showed the height and extent of the building, were, however, enough to show heaps of weapons of every kind—muskets, sabres, pikes, and even pitchforks and scythes, on the floor. On one side, raised on a sort of desk, was a ruffianly figure, flinging placards to the crowd below, and often adding some savage comment on their meaning, which produced a general laugh. Flags inscribed with "Liberty—Bread or Blood—Down with the Tyrant!" —and that comprehensive and peculiarly favourite motto of the mob—"May the last of the kings be strangled with the entrails of the last of the priests!"—were hung from the walls, and in the centre of the floor were ranged several pieces of artillery, surrounded by their gunners. I now fully acknowledged the exactness of Mendoza's information, and began to feel considerable uncertainty about my own fate, in the midst of a horde of armed ruffians, who came pouring in more thickly every moment, and seemed to grow continually more ferocious. At length I was ordered to go forward to a sort of platform at the head of the hall, where some candles were still burning, and the remnants of a supper gave signs that there had been grouped the chief persons of this tremendous assemblage. A brief interrogatory from one of them, armed to the teeth, and with a red cap so low down on his bushy brows as almost wholly

to disguise his physiognomy, demanded my name, my business in Paris, and especially what I had to allege against my being shot as a spy in the pay of the Tuileries? My answers were drowned in the roar of the multitude. Still I protested firmly against this summary trial, and at length threatened them with the vengeance of my country. This might be heroic, but it was evidently injudicious. Patriotism is a fiery affair, and a circle of pistols and daggers ready for action waited but the signal from the inquirer. He rose with some solemnity, and, taking off his cap to give the ceremonial a more authentic aspect, declared me to have "forfeited the right to live, by acting the part of an *espion*," and ordered me to be shot "in front of the battalion of the army of vengeance."

The decree was so unexpected that, for the instant, the sight left my eyes, my ears tingled with strange sounds, and I almost felt as if I had received the shots of the ruffians, who now, uncontrollable in their first triumph, were firing their pistols in all quarters in the air. But at this moment, so formidable to my future career, I heard the clock of Notre Dame. I felt a sudden return of my powers and recollections. The sound of the signal for their march produced a rush of the crowd towards the gate; I took advantage of the confusion, struck down one of my captors, shook off the other, and plunged into the living torrent now pouring and struggling before me.

Yet, even when I had reached the open air, I was still in the midst of the multitude, and any attempt to make my way alone would have obviously been death. Thus was I carried on along the Boulevard, in the heart of a column of a hundred thousand maniacs, trampled, driven, hustled by the rabble, and deafened with shouts, yells, and cries of vengeance, until my frame was in a fever, and my brain in scarcely less than a frenzy.

That terrible morning gave the death-blow to the mighty monarchy of the Bourbons! The throne was already so shaken by the popular arm, that though it still preserved a semblance of its original shape, a touch was sufficient to cast it to the ground. I have no heart for the recital.

Long before daybreak, they had swept all minor resistance before them, plundered the arsenal of its arms, and

taken possession of the Hôtel de Ville. The few troops at the different posts on our way, had been captured without an effort, or had joined the insurgents. But the adverse intelligence now came that the palace was roused at last, that troops were ordered from the country for its defence, and that the noblesse were crowding to the Tuileries. I stood beside Danton when those tidings were brought to him. He flung up his cap in the air, with a burst of laughter. "So much the better!" he exclaimed; "the closer the preserve, the thicker the game." I had now my first view of this hero of democracy. His figure was herculean; his countenance, which possibly in his younger days had been handsome, was now marked with the lines of every passion and profligacy, but it was still commanding. His costume was one which he had chosen for himself, and which was worn by his peculiar troop; a short brown mantle, an under-robe with the arms naked to the shoulder, a broad leathern belt loaded with pistols, a huge sabre in his hand, rusted from hilt to point, which he declared to have been stained with the blood of aristocrats; and the republican red cap, which he frequently waved in the air, or lifted on the point of his sabre as a standard. Yet, in the midst of all this savage disorder of costume, I observed every hair of his enormous whiskers to be curled with the care of a Parisian *merveilleux*. It was the most curious specimen of the ruling passion that I remember to have seen, even in the city of coxcombry.

At the Hôtel de Ville, Danton entered the hall with several of the insurgent leaders; and the crowd, unwilling to waste time, began to fire at the little statues and insignia of the French kings, which ornamented this old building. When this amusement palled—the French are easily *ennuied*—they formed circles, and danced the Carmagnole. Rum and brandy, largely supplied, gave them animation after their night's watching, and they were now fit for any atrocity. But the beating of drums, and a rush to the balconies of the Hôtel de Ville, told us that something of importance was at hand; and in the midst of a group of municipal officers, Petion, the mayor of Paris, arrived. No man in France wore a milder visage, or hid a blacker heart under it. A cannon-shot now gave the signal for the march,

and we advanced to the grand prize of the day. I can describe but little more of the assault on the Tuileries than that it was a scene of desperate confusion on both sides. The front of the palace continually covered with the smoke of fire-arms from all the casements; and the front of the mob a similar cloud of smoke, under which men fired, fled, got drunk, danced, and died! Nothing could be more ferocious or more feeble.

At length the struggle drew to a close. A rumour spread "that the king had left the palace, and gone to the Assembly." The cry arose, on all sides—"Advance, the day is our own!" The whole multitude now pushed forward, clashing their pikes and muskets, and firing their cannon, which were worked by deserters from the royal troops; the Marseillais, a band of the most desperate-looking ruffians that eye was ever set upon, chiefly galley-slaves and the profligate banditti of a seaport, led the column of assault; and the sudden and extraordinary cessation of the fire from the palace windows seemed to promise an easy conquest.

But, as the smoke subsided, I saw a long line of troops drawn up in front of the principal entrance. Their scarlet uniforms showed that they were the Swiss. The gendarmerie, the National Guard, the regular battalions, had abandoned them, and their fate seemed inevitable. But there they stood, firm as iron. Their assailants recoiled; but the discharge of some cannon-shots, which told upon the ranks of those brave and unfortunate men, gave them new courage, and they poured onward. The voice of the Swiss commandant, giving the word to fire, was now heard, and it was followed by a rolling discharge, from flank to flank, of the whole battalion. It was my first experience of the effect of fire; and I was astonished at its precision, rapidity, and deadly effect. In an instant, almost the whole troop of the Marseillais, in our front, were stretched upon the ground, and every third man in the first line of the sections was killed or wounded. Before this shock could be recovered we heard the word "fire" again from the Swiss, and a second shower of bullets burst upon our ranks. The sections turned, and fled in all directions, some by the Pont Neuf, some by the Place Carrousel. The rout was complete; the terror, the confusion, and the yelling of the wounded,

were horrible. The havoc was increased by a party of the defenders of the palace, who rushed down into the court and fell with desperation on the fugitives. I felt that now was my time to escape, and I darted behind one of the buttresses of a royal *porte-cochère*, to let the crowd pass me. The skirmishing continued at intervals, and an officer in the uniform of the Royal Guard was struck down by a shot, close to my feet. As he rolled over, I recognized his features. He was Lafontaine! With an inconceivable shudder I looked on his pale countenance. But, as I drew the body within the shelter of the gate, I found that he still breathed; he opened his eyes, and I had the happiness, after waiting in suspense till the dusk, of conveying him to my hotel.

Of the remaining events of this most calamitous day, I know but what all the world knows. It broke down the monarchy. It was the last struggle in which a possibility existed of saving the throne. The gentlest of the Bourbons was now within sight of the scaffold. No people in the history of rebellion ever suffered so keenly or so rapidly as the French the vengeance which belongs to national crimes. The saturnalia was followed by massacre. Like the Scripture miracle of the demoniac, the spirits which had once exhibited their evil in the shape of man, were transmitted into the shape of the brute; and even the swine ran down by instinct, and perished in the waters.

CHAPTER XIII.

My first questions to Lafontaine, when I had his wound looked to, were for those whom he had left in England.

"Ha, ha!" said he with a laugh, which showed the inextinguishable Frenchman, "are you constant still? Well, then, Madame la Comtesse is constant too; but it is to her boudoir, or the gaieties of H—— House, or perhaps to her abhorrence of Monsieur le Mari."

"Le Mari!" I repeated the words, with an involuntary start.

"Bah! 'tis all the same. She is affianced, and among us that tie is quite as fixed as marriage, and, our libellers say, a

little stronger. But they certainly are *not* married yet, for Mademoiselle Clotilde either is, or affects, the invalid."

"But your Mariamne—how go on your interests there?" The question brought a smile and a sigh together before he could find an answer.

"How she is, what she is doing, or even what she is, are matters that I can no more answer than I can why the wind blows. She torments me, and takes delight in tormenting me. She is intolerable."

"And yet you have obtained a lengthening of your chain, or how come here? How long have you been in Paris?"

"Just two days; and busy ones, or I should have found you out before. Yes, I had Mariamne's full permission to come, though, to this moment, I cannot account for the change. I had received a sudden order from Montrecour, who is deep in the emigrant affairs, to set out with letters which could not be sent by a courier. Her postscript was the strangest part of all. It was a grave recommendation to discover *you*, in whatever height or depth of the capital you might exist, and commending *me*, as a truant and a trifler, to your 'especial, grave, and experienced protection.' Apropos! She sent me a letter, to be delivered with my own hands. But for yourself it had nearly failed in the delivery."

He gave me the letter. It was, like the writer, a pretty *mêlange*;—trifles gracefully expressed, and palpable and fond anxiety for Lafontaine, couched in the most merciless badinage. While I gave this missive a second and even a third perusal—for it finished with some gentle mention of the being whose name was a charm to my wearied spirit—my eyes accidentally fell on Lafontaine. His were fixed on me with an expression of inconceivable distress. At length his generous nature broke forth.

"Marston, if I were capable of jealousy, I should be jealous of you and of Mariamne. I shall not ask *what* Mariamne has said to you—but *I* am miserable."

"Yes, but you *shall* ask and shall have all you ask," said I, giving him the letter. "It is the language of the heart, and of a heart strongly attached to *you*. I can see affection in every line of it. Of course she mingles a little coquetry with her sentiment; but was there ever a pretty woman who

was not more or less a coquette? Rely upon your little Mariamne."

"Then *you* have no sincere regard for her—no wish to interfere with my claims?" said my pallid friend, dubiously extending his hand towards me.

"Lafontaine, listen to me, and for the last time on the subject. It is impossible not to acknowledge the animated graces of her on whom you have fixed your affections. But mine are fixed where I have neither hope to sustain them nor power to change. Those matters have nothing to do with choice."

"But, Marston, you will only laugh at me for all my anxieties."

"Lafontaine, I shall do no such thing. Those pains and penalties have been the lot of the noblest hearts and most powerful minds that the earth has ever seen, and have been most keenly felt by the noblest and the most powerful. But, my friend, tell me what brought you out of quiet England among our madmen here."

"I may now tell all the world," was the reply, "for the evil is done beyond remedy. I was sent by our friends in London to carry the last warning to the royal family of all that has happened on this dreadful day. My papers contained the most exact details, the names of the leaders, their objects, their hour of assembling, and even their points of attack."

I mentioned the fruitlessness of my own efforts to awake the ministry.

"Ah," said he, with a melancholy smile, "my friend, if you had been admitted into the palace, or into the council-chamber itself, you would have had precisely the same tale to tell. All was infatuation. I was ushered into the council last night. I was even closeted for two hours with the two individuals who, of all France, or of all mankind, had the largest stake in the crisis. I offered to take a squadron of dragoons, and arrest the conspirators at the moment with my own hand. I saw the eyes of the noblest of women fill with tears of grief and indignation at the hopelessness of my appeal. I saw that all was over."

"Still," said I, "I cannot comprehend how the mere

mob of Paris could have succeeded against the defenders of the palace."

"If you had seen it as I did; the only wonder is, how the Tuileries held out so long. After passing a night on guard at the Pavillon de Flore, I was summoned at daybreak to attend his majesty. What a staff for a monarch on the eve of a civil war! From the windows there was another scene; and the only moment when I saw the queen shudder was when she cast her eye across the Place du Carrousel, and saw it covered with the masses of the multitude drawn up in battle array. A more gloomy sight never met the eye. From time to time, the distant discharge of cannon was heard, giving us the idea that some treachery was transacting in the remoter parts of the city, every discharge answered by a roar of—'Down with the King'—'Death to Marie Antoinette'—'The lamp-iron to traitors.' As I glanced on those round me, I saw despair in every countenance; the resolution, perhaps, to die, but the evident belief that their death must be in vain. You now know all."

I expressed my strong sympathy with the sufferings of the royal family and their defenders within the palace.

"Marston, I cannot think of them. I cannot speak of them. I see nothing but a vision of blood, shame, folly, and wretchedness. There never was a cause more fatally abandoned. Everything that could be done to ruin a monarchy was done. I was standing beside the royal group, when a deputation from the National Assembly made its appearance. At its head was a meagre villain, whom one might have taken for the public executioner. He came up, cringing and bowing, to the unfortunate king, but with a look which visibly said—'We have you in our power.' I could have plunged my sword in the triumphant villain's heart. I had even instinctively half drawn it, when I felt the pressure of a gentle hand on mine. It was the queen's. 'Remember the king's presence. We must owe nothing to violence,' were her words. And at that instant she looked so heart-broken, yet so noble, that I could have worshipped her. All were silent. In a few minutes more, our sad procession was crossing the garden to the door of the Assembly, amid a roar, which could not have been fiercer or more

triumphant had we been going to execution." His tongue faltered; his gallant heart heaved, and tears burst from his eyes. I am not sure that I did not follow them with mine.

It was now near midnight. Lafontaine's wound began to bleed afresh by the agitation of his story; and to find medical assistance was now my first object. Having seen him conveyed to my bed, I hastened towards the residence of the physician to the embassy. In doing this, I had to cross the Rue St. Honoré. But there my course was stopped.

The populace were returning from the conquest and plunder of the palace to the Palais Royal, the head-quarters of all convulsion; and they had arranged their ranks into something like a triumphal procession on the stage. The dead bodies of the brave Swiss were carried, as trophies, on boards or biers, preceded by the revolutionary banners; the plundered ornaments of the Tuileries were borne on the heads of men; the horses from the royal stables, caparisoned for the occasion, drew hearses, in which the bodies of the mob who had fallen were laid.

The train seemed countless. Shocked and sickened, I had made repeated efforts to cross the column, but was as repeatedly driven back. If all the dead criminality of Paris had risen to join all the living, it could scarcely have increased my astonishment at the thousands which continued to pour on before me; nor scarcely, if the procession had started from the grave, could it have looked more strange, squalid, and startling. In the rear came the cannon. My anxiety for my unfortunate friend at last urged me to make a desperate attempt to force my way through the mass of pikes and daggers. After being swept far along with the stream, I reached the street in which the physician lived. He set out with me immediately; and, by his superior knowledge of the route, we were enabled to make our way to my hotel.

But there a new and still more alarming disappointment awaited me. I found the *Suisse* and all the attendants of the establishment gathered on the stairs in terror. Lafontaine was gone! Whether frenzied by the insults and yells of the populace, who continued to pass in troops from time

to time, or in doubt of my safety, he had started from his bed, put on his sword, and rushed into the street; without the possibility of being restrained, and without uttering a word of explanation.

Exhausted as I was by fatigue, and still more by the sights and scenes through which I had just passed, this intelligence was peculiarly painful. The fate of a young enthusiast, and a foreigner, whom I had known but so lately, and of whom I knew so little, might not have justified much personal sacrifice. But the thought of the heart that would be broken by his falling into the hands of the barbarians, who were now masters of everything, smote keenly upon me. Mariamne would die; and though I was by no means a lover of Mariamne, yet, where I had seen so much that was loveable, I might fairly feel a regard next in degree.

While I pondered, a note was brought to me, written by Lafontaine before he had sallied from his chamber, and evidently written under the wildest emotion. It told me, in a few scarcely legible words, "that he felt life a burden to him, and thanked Heaven for the opportunity now offered of dying for his king and the glory of France; that the monarchy had perished beyond redemption; but that, though the royal family were surrounded by the poniards of assassins, it was his determination to follow and find them, to rescue them, or die at their feet." This strange production closed with—"You shall hear of me within twenty-four hours, living or dead. If I fall, remember me to my affianced wife; and vindicate my character to the world."

This was so like insanity, that it perplexed me more and more; but, on second thoughts, it appeared to offer some clue to me in his pursuit. He had gone to die in the presence of the royal family. If they were to be found by him at all, they must be found in the Assembly. I immediately hurried to the garden of the Tuileries. A strong force of the National Guard still kept the drunken rabble at a distance; and the five-franc piece, with which I tempted the incorruptibility of a peculiarly ferocious-looking patriot, admitted me without delay.

What a scene there presented itself to my eyes! The "Salle" was large and showy; and when I had attended it,

in former debates, it exhibited the taste and skill which the French, more than any other people on earth, exhibit in temporary things. Nothing could exceed the elegance with which the Parisian decorators had fitted up this silk and tinsel abode, which was to be superseded, within a few months, by the solid majesty of marble. But, on this memorable and melancholy night, the ornaments bore, to me, the look of those sad frivolities with which France is fond of ornamenting her tombs. There, indeed, lay in state the monarchy of France. My unlucky friend, of course, was not there; but I saw, in a narrow box, on the right of the president, a group from which, when once seen, I found it impossible to withdraw my gaze—the first and most exalted victims of the Revolution, the king and his family! All but one were apparently overcome with fatigue; for they had sat there fifteen hours. But that one sat with a steady eye and an erect front, as if superior to all suffering. I had seen Marie Antoinette, the most splendid figure, in all the splendours of her court. I had seen her unshaken before vast popular assemblages, in which any rash or ruffian hand might have taken her life at the instant; but she now gave me an impression of a still higher order. Sitting in calm resignation and unstained dignity, her stately form and countenance, pale and pure as marble, looked like some noble statue on a tomb.

But the slumbers of the Assembly were soon to be broken. A tumult, and the trampling of many feet, was heard at the door. It was followed by the thunder of clubs and hammers breaking it in; the bars gave way; the huissiers and other attendants took refuge behind the chair of the president, in affright; and, with a roar which spoke the supremacy of the new power in France, the mob poured in. They announced themselves as a deputation from the municipality, and instantly took possession of the benches. Men, women, and even children, composed this barbarian invasion,—like all whom I had seen, half intoxicated; but evidently trained by higher hands for more determined evil. A chosen troop of orators, in Roman robes, probably plundered from some suburb theatre, moved forward to the table, and took their seats around it with the solemnity of conscript fathers. The chief speaker advanced, preceded

by the head of one of the murdered Swiss on a pike—a hideous spectacle—and, drawing from his belt a dagger, commenced a furious harangue against everything that bore the shape of authority in the kingdom. The Assembly itself did not escape in the general outpouring of his bitterness. They were charged with want of zeal, with want of honesty, and, most formidable of all, want of patriotism. I saw many a member cowed at the word, for it was the countersign of Jacobinism; and the man on whom that charge was personally fastened was sure to fall by pistol or dagger. But the rage of the harangue was levelled at the royal family. "There sits the tyrant!" he exclaimed, pointing with his poniard to the meekest of monarchs and of men. "The blood of tyrants is the only incense worthy to be offered by a regenerated people!"

At every pause of those fierce interjections, the crowd burst into yells of applause, drew knives and daggers from their bosoms, flourished them in the air, and echoed the words. The Assembly were evidently in terror for their lives. The president made some faint attempts to restore order; a few of the members made faint attempts at speeches; but the mob were masters. At daybreak, the orator demanded that a decree should be passed suspending the king, the ministry, and even the Assembly in the midst of which he stood. Of all the extravagances ever conceived—of all the insolences of power—of all the licences of popular licentiousness, his demand was the most daring, unrivalled, and unimagined; and yet this was carried, with scarcely a voice raised against it. The trembling president, with the dagger before his eyes, put the motion for extinguishing the throne, the cabinet, and calling a new Assembly! From that hour the monarchy was no more.

During this tremendous discussion, I had not ventured to raise my eyes towards the royal family; but as all were now about to retire, I dared a single glance. From the Feuillans, the royal family were consigned to the cells of the Temple, from which Louis and Marie Antoinette never emerged but to the grave!

That night taught me a lesson which neither time nor circumstance has ever made me forget. It cured me of all my republican fantasies, at once and for ever. "If I forget

thee even in my mirth," the language of the Israelite to his beloved city, was mine, with scarcely a less solemn or sacred feeling. Let the hearts and eyes of others refuse to acknowledge such emotions. I am not ashamed to say that I have shed many a tear over the fate of the king and queen of France. What must it be to have witnessed the last agonies of their hearts and throne!

On returning to my chambers, shuddering and wretched, I found a despatch on my table. It was from Downing-street; an order that within twelve hours after its receipt I should set out from Paris, and make my way with the utmost secresy to the head-quarters of the Austrian and Prussian army, where further orders would be waiting for me.

This command threw me into new perplexity. It had been my purpose to find my unfortunate friend, if he was not already in the bosom of the Seine or a victim to some of the popular violences. But my orders were peremptory. I, however, did all that was in my power. I spent the day in looking for him, through all the hotels and hospitals, and, after a hopeless search, gave my man of mystery, Mendoza, a commission, paid for at a rate that made him open his hollow eyes wide, with incredulity, on the coin, to discover and protect him wherever he was to be found.

But I had now another difficulty, which threatened to nip my diplomatic honours in the bud. The news had just arrived that the allied armies had passed the frontier, and were sweeping all before them with fire and sword. All my applications were powerless. The government were themselves regarded as under lock and key; the populace, as if determined that all should share a common massacre, were clustered at the barriers, pike in hand, to put all "emigrants" to death; the ambassador was, as ambassadors generally are in cases of real difficulty, a cipher; and yet I must leave Paris within twelve hours, or be cashiered.

It at length occurred to me to avail myself of my Jewish acquaintance, and I found him listening to a midnight harangue in the midst of a Jacobin crowd, in the Palais Royal. He considered the matter for a while; and I walked about, leaving him to his free invention, while I contrasted the brilliant blaze of the gaming and dancing rooms above

me with the assassin-like darkness of the galleries below. At length he turned to me. "There is but one way. Have you any objection to be arrested?"

"The greatest imaginable," was my answer

"Just as you please," he replied; "but I have here an order for the seizure of one of the emigrant agents, a Chevalier Lafontaine, lately arrived in Paris. The order is for Vincennes. Will you take his place?"

I naturally looked all surprise, and peremptorily refused.

"Do as you will," said my intractable adviser, "but there is no other way to pass the gates. I shall take you to Vincennes as a state prisoner; I have influence there. In short, if you trust me, you shall be safe, and on your road by daybreak."

All this was likely enough: there was but a moment to deliberate, and I got into the first cabriolet, and drove with him to the barrier. We passed the guard at the gate, after a slight examination of the order, and galloped to Vincennes.

At the sight of the frowning fortress, my blood chilled, and I refused to go further. "In that case," said my conductor, "I am compromised, and you are ruined; the first patrol will seize you, while I shall be shot. I pledge myself that here you shall not remain; but I must be acquitted to the head of the police. You shall be M. le Chevalier Lafontaine for the night; and if such a man exists, you will probably be the means of saving his life. To-morrow I shall bring proofs of my mistake, and then you will be outside the walls of Paris, and free to go where you please."

The name of Lafontaine decided me. Even the risk seemed less serious than before, and we drove over the drawbridge. All was still, stern, and noiseless. "Give me your papers," said Mendoza; "they will be safer in my hands than yours."

I had but time to give him my despatch, as we passed through the court which led to the governor's apartments. I stoutly denied my being the criminal, who had offended the "majesty of the people." But as the governor himself, on gazing at me with his purblind eyes, was perfectly satisfied of my identity, there was no use in contesting the point.

A couple of sentinels were placed at the door of my cell, and I was left, like himself, to my slumbers.

Time rolls on, whether we are happy or miserable. Morning came, and found me feverish from a thousand dreams. Noon came, and my impatience grew with the hour. Evening came, and yet no symptom of my liberation.

As hour after hour dragged its slow length along, I sank from dejection to dejection, or burst from rage to rage. But at last, when the drums of the garrison were making their final flourish for the night, the key turned in the door of my cell, and the Jew entered. I almost sprang upon him; and his life would have been worth little but for the words,—"You may now leave the fortress."

He told me further that my absence was fortunate, for a domiciliary visit had been paid to my apartments by direction of the municipality, my trunks examined, and my doors sealed. My absence was imputed to flight; and as gaols were then the only safe residences in France, I had escaped actual imprisonment simply by my volunteer detention. Mendoza's proofs were registered in due form; and with unspeakable delight I once again mounted his cabriolet, and heard the chains of the drawbridge rattle behind me.

My Jew had been true to his pledge. I found horses provided for me at a lonely cabaret a league off. With the minute foresight which men of his trade learn, he had provided for me a couple of disguises, but I was weary of disguise. It had never thriven with my temperament. The only recompence which my magnanimous police officer would receive was a promise that I should mention his conduct to Mordecai; and gathering up his rejected wardrobe, he departed.

Fortunately I found disguises unnecessary. The country was all in a state of flight, and every man was too much employed in securing himself to think of laying hold of others. Thus galloped I through hill and dale, through bush and brier, unquestioned, and almost unseen, until on the evening of the fourth day, as I plunged into a forest, I was awakened to the realities of things by the whistle of a bullet, which struck off a branch within an inch of my head,

followed by a fierce howl for the "countersign." A troop of Hulans poured round me, sabre in hand. I stood like a stoic, and of course attempted to tell who I was. But my German was unintelligible to my captors, and my French, a suspicious language on a Prussian outpost, only confirmed their opinion that I was born to be stripped. Accordingly one demanded my watch, another my purse, and I was in a fair way of entering the Prussian lines in a state of pauperism; or of being "left alone in my glory" by shot or sabre, when an officer rode up whom I had casually known in some Parisian circle. To him I could explain myself, and to him I exhibited the envelope of my letter, inscribed with the words "Grand Quartier Général." My new friend bowed to this awful address, ordered the instant and very reluctant restitution of my property, and, with a couple of the squadron at our heels, took me under his escort, to deliver my papers in person.

After a wild gallop through rocks, rivulets, and brambles, which seemed without end, a sudden opening of the forest brought us within view of the immense camp of the combined armies.

All the externals of war are splendid; it is the interior, the consequences, the operation of that mighty trampler of man, that are startling. This was my first sight of that most magnificent of all the atrocious inventions of human evil—an army. The forces of the two most warlike monarchies of Europe were now spread before me; nearly a hundred and fifty thousand troops, with all the numberless followers of a host in the field, covering a range of low hills which encircled the horizon. While we were still at a considerable distance, a gun was fired from the central hill, answered by others from the flanks. The rolling of drums set the vast line in motion, and just at the moment when the sun was lying on the edge of the west, the brigades, descending each from its height, halted on the slope. The whole vast manœuvre was executed with the exactness of a machine. The blaze of the sun on the arms, on the standards, and the tents crowning the brow of the hills, was magical. "Are they marching to battle?" was my amazed question to my companion. His only answer was to check his charger, take off his shako, and bend his fore-

head to his saddle-bow. A burst of universal harmony, richer than I had ever yet heard, explained the mystery. It was the evening prayer. The fine bands of the regiments joined the voices of the soldiery, and I listened, in unbroken rapture and reverence, until its close. In court or cathedral, in concert or shrine, I had never before so fully felt the power of sound. It finished in a solemn chorus, an accumulation of glorious harmonies.

The discharge of cannon announced the conclusion of the service; we put spurs to our horses, and entered the lines. On the strength of my credentials, I had distinguished quarters assigned to me.

CHAPTER XIV.

I now, for the first time since I left England, began to feel the advantages of birth. In London every man is so submerged in the multitude that he who can hold his head high enough above the living surge to be known must have something of remarkable buoyancy or peculiar villany about him. Even parliament, except to a few of the leaders, is no distinction. The member for the shire is clipped of all his plumage at the moment of his entering that colossal poultry-yard, and must take his obscure pickings with other unnoticeable fowl. In Paris, once the Mahomedan paradise of stars and garters, once the central herald's office of the earth, the royal region of ancient aristocracy, where the beggar with a *cordon* on his breast outshone the banker with millions in his pocket-book, the world was totally changed; and to be the son or brother of a peer might have been only a speedier passport to the lamp-post. But in Germany, the land of pedigrees, to be an "honourable" was to be one on whom the sun shone with double beams; on whom the sex, young and old, smiled with double softness, and the whole host of "serenities" were doubly serene.

But the man with whom my mission brought me most immediately into contact, and to whom I was most indebted for courtesy, would have been a remarkable personage in

any country of Europe; that man was the Duke of Brunswick.

On my arrival I found two letters forwarded from London, and in the hands of an aide-de-camp of the generalissimo. The first which I opened was from the Foreign-office, a simple statement of the purpose for which I was sent—namely, to stimulate the activity of the Prussian councils, and to urge the commander of the army to an immediate movement on the French capital—with a postscript, directing me, in case of any tardiness being exhibited at head-quarters, instantly to transmit a despatch home, and return to my post in Paris. The second letter—which I must, however undiplomatically, admit that I opened with much stronger interest—was from Mordecai. I glanced over it for some mention of the "one loved name," and then bitterly laughed at my own folly. All was brief and rapid.

"If this shall find you in the Prussian camp, you will have no more time for me than I have for you. Let me not clip your diplomatic wings; but this I forewarn you—you will not obtain a single object of your journey, except, perhaps, that of showing that you can gallop a hundred miles in the four-and-twenty hours, and can make your way through a country of lunatics without being piked or sabred.

"The campaign is over already—over before it has begun. The battle was fought in the council at Berlin, and the allies were beaten. The duke, within the next fortnight, will be deciding on the merits of the ballet in Brunswick, and the French will be madder than ever with triumphs which they never won, preparing for conquests which are already gained, and knocking down thrones, the owners themselves supplying the pickaxes and hammers. *You* will see the two best armies of the Continent running away from their own shadows; the old councillors of Frederick and Maria Theresa baffled by cabinets of cobblers and tinkers; grey-beard generals, in spite of all their stars, hunted over the frontier by boys, girls, and old women; and France, like a *poissarde* in a passion, with her hair flying about her ears, her knife in hand, and her tongue in full swing, scampering half-naked over Europe, to the infinite wonder of the wearers of velvet, Mechlin lace, and diadems,—ha, ha, ha!"

While I was trying to decipher this riddle, which was

rather too contemptuous for my new views of things, an officer was announced as Count Vornhorst, on the staff of the duke. His countenance struck me at first sight, and I soon discovered that when I was a boy at Eton he had been on a visit of a few days at Mortimer Castle, in the suite of one of the Prussian princes. We were thus old friends, and we now became young ones within the first quarter of an hour. His countenance was that of a humourist, and his recollections of the Great Frederick rendered him sarcastic on all things of the later generation.

"The duke has sent me to you," said he, "with his apologies for keeping you out of bed, but he has appointed midnight for the delivery of your despatches."

"But what can you tell me of the duke?"

"Oh! a great deal; but you know that I am on his staff, and therefore bound to keep his secrets."

"Yet, count, remember that we have sworn an eternal friendship within the last five minutes. What can he or I be the worse for my knowing all his good qualities?"

"My dear young friend, when you are as old as I am, you will see the impropriety of such questions."

"Well, then, to come to the point; is he really *the* general?"

"He speaks French better than any other prince in Germany."

"What is he as a politician?"

"You must see him on horseback; he rides like a centaur."

"Well, then, in one sentence, will he fight the French?"

"That wholly depends on whether he turns his horse's head towards Paris or Berlin."

"My dear count, but one question more, which you may answer without a riddle. Do you think that he will receive my mission cordially?"

"He speaks your language; he wears your broad cloth; he loves your beer; and he has married one of your princesses." I laughed.

"All my difficulties are answered. I am ready; but what shall I find him doing at this extraordinary hour?"

"If asleep, dreaming of the opera at Brunswick; if awake, dreaming of the opera at Paris."

His diamond repeater, which he had laid on the table

between us, struck twelve as he spoke; and, wrapping ourselves in our cloaks, we sallied forth into one of the most starry nights of autumn, and made our way, through long ranges of patrols and vedettes, to the quarters of the generalissimo.

The mansion was an old chateau, evidently long abandoned to loneliness and decay; one of those huge edifices whose building had cost one fortune, and whose support had exhausted another. However, the struggle had been over for the last fifty years; and two or three shrivelled domestics remained, simply to keep out the invasion of the bats and owls. But at this period the chateau exhibited, of course, another scene; aides-de-camp, generals, orderlies, couriers—all the clang and clamour of the staff of a great army—rang through the wild old halls, and echoed round the long, ghostly corridors. Every apartment was a blaze of light, and filled with *employés* and officers of the Prussian and Austrian guards; all was billiard-playing, talking, singing in chorus, and carousing, in all the noisy gaiety of the soldier in good quarters.

"All this is tempting enough," said the gallant count, as we hastened along a gallery that seemed endless, but on which the open doors of the successive apartments threw broad illumination. "I dare say, Mr. Marston, that you would prefer taking your seat among those lively fellows to the honour of a ducal conference; but my orders are that you must not be seen until the duke gives you *carte blanche* to appear among human beings again."

The count now opened the door of an apartment, which appeared to have been more lately tenanted than the rest, yet which exhibited signs of its old desertion. The count had left me, to ascertain when the duke should be at leisure, and my immediate process was, like that of a good soldier, to reconnoitre the neighbouring territory. The first door which I opened led into a conservatory; the casement distantly overlooked the esplanade in front of the chateau; and the perpetual movements of the couriers and *estafettes*, arriving and departing in crowds, the galloping of escorts, and the march of patrols, occupied me until a valet of the duke came to announce that supper was served in the apartment which I had lately quitted.

I returned, and found the chamber which I had left so dark and dilapidated, changed, as if by a fairy wand, into pomp and elegance. The duke was renowned for splendid extravagance; and the table was covered with gold plate, the walls glittered with a profusion of lamps, and all round me had the look of regal luxury. But one object suddenly caught my gaze, which left me no power to glance at any other. In a recess, hitherto obscure, but over which now blazed a brilliant girandole, hung a full-length portrait of a nun, which, but for the dress, I should have pronounced to be Clotilde—the same Greek profile, the same deep yet vivid eye, the same matchless sweetness of smile, and the same mixture of melancholy and enthusiasm, which had made me think my idol fit to be the worship of the world. I stood wrapped in astonishment, in delight, pain, a thousand undefined feelings, until I could have almost imagined that the canvas before me lived. I saw its eye all but glisten, its lips all but open to speak, the very marble of its cheek begin to glow, when I was awakened by a lively voice saying in French—"Ah, M. Marston, I perceive that you are a connoisseur." I turned to the speaker, and saw a man somewhat above the middle size—a remarkably noble-looking personage—in full dress even at that hour, powdered and perfumed, and altogether a court figure; his fingers loaded with rings, and a diamond star of the Garter on his breast. It required no introducer to tell me I was in the presence of the Duke of Brunswick."

"Come," said he, "we have no time for etiquette, nor indeed much for anything else to-night—we must sup first, and then talk of your mission."

We sat down; a double file of valets, in liveries loaded with embroidery, attended at the table, though the party consisted of but four—Vornhorst, and a Colonel Guiscard, chief of the secret diplomacy—a pale Spanish-featured officer, to whom his highness did me the honour of introducing me as the son of one of the stranger's friends—the duke, and myself making up the number.

Guiscard fixed his deep dark eye on me, without a word; at that moment he reminded me exactly of one of the Inquisitors—the profound, dark-visaged men whom the matchless pencil of Velasquez has immortalized.

Vornhorst burst out into a laugh.

"What, Guiscard," said he, "are you reconnoitring the ground before you make the attack? Your royal highness, I think we ought to vindicate our country to this English gentleman, by assuring him that the colonel is *not* a cardinal in disguise."

The colonel merely smiled, the duke laughed, and began a conversation upon all possible topics—England forming the chief.

In the midst of our gaiety, in which the duke had completely laid down his sceptre, the great clock of the chateau tolled one. The table was instantly swept of the supper; the valets withdrew. I heard the tread of a sentinel at the door of the apartment, and the duke, instantly changing from the man of fashion to the statesman, began to enter into the questions then so deeply disturbing all the cabinets of Europe.

I found the prince a very superior man to the character which I had conceived of him. He was frank and free, spoke of the intentions of the allies in the most open manner, and even censured the errors which they had already committed, with a plainness which I had not expected to find out of London. I never was more surprised at the contrast between this conception and the animated and accomplished man before me. He seemed to know not merely the persons of all the leading men of Europe—which might have naturally been the case with one who had visited every capital—but to be acquainted with their characters, their abilities, and even their modes of thinking. He seemed to me one born to rule.

Among other topics he spoke with peculiar force on the necessity of a strong European combination against France, and flatteringly addressed to me a strong panegyric on my country.

"If we can obtain," said he, "the cordial co-operation of the English people, I see no difficulty before us. We already have the ministry with us, but I know the Englishman's hatred of a foreign war, his horror of public expenditure on continental interests, and his general distrust of the policy of foreign courts."

My remark was "that the chief difficulty with the nation

would be to convince them that the allied powers were not influenced by personal motives;" adding that "the only thing which could engage the public spirit in the war would be a conviction of its absolute justice and stern necessity."

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a staff officer with despatches from Berlin. A number of papers were laid on the table, and handed over to Vornhorst and Guiscard to read. One paper the duke read with evident interest, and marked with his pencil down the margin.

"I am delighted," said he, "that this paper has reached us at last. M. Marston will now see what my real advice has been from the beginning. The French journals attacked me furiously for the declaration issued at our entrance on the frontier. The journals of England partly echoed the French, and I am held up to the world as the author of the *Declaration of Pilnitz*. This paper, which M. Marston will do me the honour to send at daybreak to his court by a special messenger, will clear my character with his countrymen at once—with the rest of Europe I am content to wait a little longer."

He then read the paper in his hand—it was a long and striking protest against the idea of partitioning France, or of having any other intention in the movement of the troops than the security of the French throne. This document had been sent to the Council at Berlin, and been returned by them for revision by the duke, and the softening of its rather uncourtly decisiveness of expression.

The paper thus returned, and containing the observations of the party, was given to Vornhorst to be copied. "And now," said the duke, "gentlemen, I think we may retire for the night; we have but three hours until the march in the morning. Good night! To-morrow at five the *advance* moves. At six I shall be on horseback, and then—Well! what matter for the *then?* We shall sleep at least *to-night* —and so farewell."

At daybreak the bustle of the camp awoke me. I rose hastily, mounted my horse, and spurred to the rendezvous of the general staff. The advance of the combined forces had moved at early dawn, and its columns were seen far away. The sound of their trumpets and bands was heard

from time to time. The troops now passing under the knoll on which the commander-in-chief and his staff had taken their stand, were the main body, and were Austrian —fine-looking battalions, superbly uniformed, and covered with military decorations, fruits of the late Turkish campaigns, the picked troops of an empire of thirty millions of men.

"You will now see," said Vornhorst, who sat curbing, with no slight difficulty, his fiery Ukraine charger at my side, "the troops of countries of which Europe in general knows no more than of the tribes of the new world. The Austrian sceptre brings into the field all the barbaric arms and costumes of the border-land of Christendom and the Turk."

Vornhorst, familiar with every service of the Continent, was a capital cicerone, and I listened with strong interest as he pronounced the names and gave little characteristic anecdotes of the gallant regiments that successively wheeled at the foot of the slope. But I was to witness a still more spirit-stirring scene.

The trampling of a multitude of horse, and the tossing of lances and banners in the distance, suddenly turned all eyes in their direction.

"Now prepare," said the count, "for a sight, perhaps not altogether so soldierlike, but fully as much to my taste, as the buff-belt and grenadiers'-cap formality of the line. You shall see the Austrian flankers—every corps equipped after its native fashion. My early service was in Transylvania, and if I were to choose troops for a desperate service, I say, give me the man of the hill, or the man of the forest, exactly in the coat of the chamois-shooter or the wolf-hunter."

He had scarcely pointed my attention to the movement when the whole body of the rear-guard was in full and rapid advance. The plain was literally covered with those irregulars, who swept on like a surge, or rather, from the diversity of their colours, and the vast half-circle which they formed on the ground, a living rainbow. Part were infantry and part cavalry, but they were so intermingled, and the motion of all was so rapid, that it was difficult to mark the distinction. From my recollection of the

History of the Seven Years' War I felt a double interest in the sight of the different castes and classes of service, which I had hitherto known only by name. Thus passed before me the famous Croatian companies—the Pandours, together forming the finest outpost troops of the army—the free companies of the Tyrol, the first marksmen of the empire, a fine athletic race, with the eagle's feather in their broad hats, and the sinewy step of the mountaineer—the lancers of the Banat, first-rate vedettes—an Albanian division which had taken service with Austria on the close of the war, and, independently of all name and order, a cloud of wild cavalry—Turk, Christian, and barbarian—who followed the campaign for its chances, and galloped, sported, and charged each other like the Arabs of the desert.

My admiration was so loud that it caught the ear of the duke. He turned his quick countenance on me, and said—"Tell our friends at home, M. Marston, what you have seen to-day. I presume you know that Maria Theresa was a first-rate soldier; or, at least, she had the happy art of finding them. You may see Laudohn's hand in her battalions. As for the light troops, Europe can show nothing superior in their kind. Trenk's Pandours and Nadasti's hussars were worth an army to Austria, from the first Silesian war down to the last shot fired in Germany. But follow me, and you shall see the work of another great master."

We spurred across the plain to the mouth of a deep wooded defile, through which the Prussian grand *corps d'armée* were advancing. The brigades which now met our view were evidently of a different character from the Austrian; their uniforms of the utmost simplicity; their march utterly silent; the heads of the columns observing their distances with such accuracy that, on a signal, they could have been instantly formed in order of battle; every movement of the main body simply directed by a flag carried from hill to hill, and the battalion movements marked by the mere waving of a sword.

True, they wanted the picturesque splendours of ancient warfare,—the "ten thousand banners," with "orient colours waving;" the "forest huge of spears," the "thronging

helms" and "serried shields, in thick array of depth immeasurable."

While the rear-guard were defiling before the duke and his staff, a courier brought despatches.

"Gentlemen," said the duke, after glancing at one of the papers, "the army of the Prince de Condé is in march to join us. They have already reached this neighbourhood. We must now lose no time. M. Marston, you will report to your government what you have seen to-day. We *are* in march for Paris."

Vornhorst and Guiscard were now summoned to the side of the duke; a spot was found where we might shelter ourselves from the overpowering blaze of the sun; the successive despatches were opened; a large map of the routes from Champagne to the capital was laid on the ground; and we dismounted, and, sitting together, like old comrades, held our hurried council of war.

"I can make but little of my French correspondents in general," said the duke, after perusing a long letter, "but M. le Duc writes like Cagliostro. He has evidently some prodigious secret, which he is determined to envelope in still deeper secresy. He tells me that La Fayette has fled; but when, where, or for what purpose, is all equally an enigma. In one sentence of his letter he would persuade me that all France is disorganized, and in the next that it is more resolved to resist than ever."

The mysterious letter was handed round our circle in succession, and seemed equally beyond the comprehension of all. Yet there was truth in it after all. We had yet to learn the temperament of a capital where every half-hour produced a total change of the popular mind. The letter, fantastically expressed as it was, conveyed the condition of the hour.

I had now entered on a course of adventure the most exciting of all others. Every nation of Europe was throwing open its armoury, and preparing its weapons for the field. The troops invading France were palpably no more than the advanced guards of Prussia and Austria. Even in all my inexperience I foresaw that the war would differ from all the past—that it would be not a war of tactics, but a war of opinion; that not armies, but the people

marshalled into hosts, would be ultimately the deciders of the victory; and that, on whichever side the popular feeling was the more serious, persevering, and intense, there the triumph would be gained.

There was but one man in the camp who did not coincide in those glittering visions. The Duke of Brunswick's language to me as we saw the tricolor waving on the walls of Longwy, the first fortress which lay in our road, was—"Sir, your court must not be deceived. We shall probably take this town and defeat the covering army, but up to this moment we have not been joined by a single peasant. The population are against us. This is not like a German war; it is more like yours in America. I have but one hundred and twenty thousand men against twenty-five millions."

The commander-in-chief was true to his word. He lost no time. Before night our batteries were in full play upon the bastions of Longwy, and as our tents had not yet overtaken us I lay down under a vineyard shed in a circle of the staff, with my cloak for my pillow, listening to the roar of our artillery, until it mingled with my dreams.

CHAPTER XV.

We were on horseback an hour before daybreak, and the cannonade still continued heavy. It was actively returned, and the ramparts were a circuit of fire. To wait for the slow approaches of a formal siege was out of the question. Intelligence had reached us that the scattered French armies, having now ascertained the point at which the burst over the frontier was to be made, had suddenly combined, and taken a strong position, directly in our way to the capital. A protracted siege would raise the country in our rear, and, thus placed between two fires, the grand army might find itself paralyzed at the first step of the campaign. The place must be battered until a breach was made, and then stormed *à la Turque*. Our anxiety during the next day was indescribable. Towards evening the reports of the engineers announced that a

practicable breach was made, and three battalions of Austrian grenadiers, and as many of Prussians, were ordered under arms for the assault. To make this gallant enterprise more conspicuous, the whole army was formed in columns, and marched to the heights which commanded a view of the fortress. The fire from our batteries now became a continued roar, and the guns of Longwy, whose fire had slackened during the day, answered them with an equal thunder; the space between was soon covered with smoke, and when the battalions of grenadiers moved down the hill-side, and plunged into the valley, they looked like masses of men disappearing into the depths of ocean. The anxiety now grew intense. I hardly breathed. "My good friend," said Vornhorst, "however fine this affair may be, live in hope of seeing something finer. Never be shot at Longwy, when you may have a chance of scaling the walls of Paris. But come, the duke is beckoning to us. Let us follow him."

We saw the general and his staff galloping from the ground, where he had remained from the beginning of the assault, to a height still more exposed, and where the balls from the fortress were tearing up the soil. Vornhorst now received a note from the chief of the staff, which produced its effect in the burst of a squadron of Prussian cavalry on the flank of the enemy's column. In a few minutes the column was broken, and we saw its wrecks swept along the side of the hill. A universal shout was sent up from the army; and our next sight was the ascent of the Austrian and Prussian standards, gradually rising through the smoke, and making their way towards the glacis. They had just reached the foot of the breach when the fire of the town suddenly ceased. A white flag waved on the rampart, and the drums of the garrison beat the *chamade*. Longwy had surrendered!

All now was triumph and congratulation. We flocked round the duke, and hailed his first conquest as a promise of continued success. He was in high spirits at an achievement which was so important to the national impression of his talents and resources. The sortie of the garrison had given the capture an *éclat* which could not have been obtained by the mere surrender of a strong place. But the most important point of all was its

surrender *before* the assault. The capitulation was a matter of half an hour, and at nightfall I followed the duke and his escort into the town. It was illuminated by order of the conquerors, and, whether *bongré* or *malgré*, it looked showy. I observed, however, that we had no acclamations. To have hissed us might be a hazardous experiment while so many Hulans were galloping through the Grande Rue; but we got no smiles. In the midst of the crowd I met Vornhorst steering his charger, with no small difficulty, and carrying a packet of notes in his hand. "Go to your quarters and dress," said my good-humoured friend. "You will have a busy night of it. The duke has invited the French commandant and his officers to dine with him, and we are to have a ball and supper afterwards for the ladies. Lose no time." The dinner was handsomely attended, and the ball more handsomely still. "Fortune de la guerre" reconciled the gallant captains of the garrison to the change; and they fully enjoyed the contrast between a night on the ramparts and the hours spent at the Prussian generalissimo's splendidly furnished table. The ball which followed exhibited a crowd of the *belles* of Longwy, all as happy as dress and dancing could make them.

But neither love nor luxury, neither the smiles of the fair *Champagnaises* nor the delight of treading on the tesselated floors and feasting on the richness of municipal tables, could now detain us. We were in our saddles by daybreak, and with horses that outstripped the wind, with hearts light as air, and with prospects of endless victory and honours innumerable before us, we galloped along, preceded, surrounded, and followed by the most showy squadrons that ever wore lace and feathers. The delight of this period was indescribable. It was to me a new birth of faculties, that resembled a new sense of being, a buoyant and elastic lightness of feelings and frame. If I am right in my theory that the mind reaches stages of its growth with still more distinctness than the frame, this was one of them. I was conscious, from this time, of a more matured view of human being, of a clearer knowledge of its impulses, of a more vigorous, firm, and enlarged capacity for dealing with the real concerns of life. But I still loved: and strange, hopeless, and bewildering as that passion was, in the breast of one who seemed destined to

meet all the diversities of fortune, it remained without relief or relaxation through all.

The army now advanced unopposed. Still we received neither cheers nor reinforcements from the population. But we had now begun to be careless on the topic. The intelligence from Paris was favourable in all the leading points. The king was resuming his popularity, though still a prisoner. The Jacobins were exhibiting signs of terror, though still masters of everything. The recruits were running away, though the decree for the general rising of the country was still arming the people. The news was exactly of that chequered order which was calculated to put us all in the highest spirits.

The duke was in great animation, and he talked to every one round him, as we rode along, with more than princely condescension. He was easy, familiar, and flushed with approaching victory. "We have now," said he, "broken through the 'iron barrier,' the pride of Vauban, and the boast of France for these hundred years. To-morrow Verdun will fall. Nothing but villages now lie in our road, and once past those heights, we shall send our light troops *en promenade* to Paris." We all responded in all ways of congratulation.

"*Apropos*," said the duke, "M. Marston, you have been later in Paris than any of us. What can you tell us of this M. Dumourier, who, I see from my letters, is appointed to the forlorn hope of France; the command of the broken armies of La Fayette and Luckner?"

My answer was briefly a hope that the new general would be as much overmatched by the duke's fortunes in the field as he had been by party in the capital. "Still, he seemed to me a clever and even a remarkable man, however inexperienced as a soldier."

"If he is the officer of that name who served in the last French war, he is an old acquaintance of mine," observed the duke. "I remember him perfectly. At all events we have nothing but this minister-general between us and Notre Dame. He has taken up a position on the Argonne ridge in our front. To force it will be but an affair of three hours. Adieu, gentlemen." He put spurs to his horse, and galloped to one of the columns which ap-

proached with trumpets sounding, and bearing the captured banner of the citadel of Longwy.

The world was now before us, and we enjoyed it to the full. Vornhorst and I were inseparable, and we feasted on the gaiety and the oddity of the various characters which campaigning developes more than any other mode of existence. "If this is the life of the Arab," I was often ready to exclaim, "what folly would it be in him to leave the wilderness! If the Esquimaux can sleep through one half of the year, and revel through the other, is he not the true philosopher, in the midst of his frost and snow?" Guiscard, who sometimes joined our party, now and then smiled at our unripe conceptions of the nature of things. I still recollect his ominous expression—"My friends, you think that the battle is to be fought in front: I can assure you that a much more severe battle is to be fought in the rear. Argonne will be more easily mastered than the king's closet, and the Aulic council." We soon had good reason to believe the oracle.

One morning, as, with half a dozen hussars, I was ranging the thickets on the flank of the advance, with the spirit of an English fox-hunter, on reaching a rising ground, I saw, some miles off, a party of horsemen making their way at full speed across the country. The perfect level of the plains, particularly in Champagne, makes the ground as open as a race-course. I called in my hussars, and we galloped forward to intercept them. On seeing us they slackened their speed, and were evidently in consultation. At length the sight of our uniforms reassured them, and one of their number rode up to us. To our infinite surprise, he announced that "General La Fayette desired to be led to the head-quarters." I now saw this memorable man for the first time. I saw a quiet visage, and a figure of moderate size, rather *embonpoint*, and altogether the reverse of that fire-eyed and lean-countenanced "Cassius" which I had pictured in my imagination. But his manners perplexed me as much as his features. They were calm, easy, and almost frank. It was impossible to recognize the Frenchman in him except by his language; and he was the last man in whom I could ever have detected that toy of the theatre, the "French *marquis*."

But, on his introduction to the duke, my ardour received a sudden chill. I saw instantly, by the utter absence of all cordiality in his reception, that the French fugitive had taken a dangerous step, and that his Parisian ill fortune had deprived his retreat of all merit in the eyes of the commander-in-chief. As I passed the lines, I saw La Fayette in charge of a troop of Hulans of the Guard, and found the duke pacing uneasily in front of the tent. He called me towards him.

"M. Marston," said he, with a vexed manner, "your capture of this morning has added to our perplexities. You acted zealously, and with the spirit that distinguishes your nation; but I heartily wish that M. La Fayette had taken any other direction than towards us."

I proposed to escort him while we were on the march, and to pledge myself for his honour when we arrived at quarters.

"Handsomely offered," was the reply. "But my duty, in the first instance, prohibits his remaining in the camp; and in the next, my feelings for himself would spare a man who has commanded the enemy's troops the sight of that actual collision which must immediately take place. We attack the defiles of the Argonne to-morrow."

He entered the tent, wrote a few lines, and returned with them to me.

"M. La Fayette must consider himself as a prisoner; but, as my wish is to treat him with respect, I must beg of you, M. Marston, to take charge of him for the time. Your offer has relieved me from an embarrassment; and I shall take care to make honourable mention of your conduct in this instance, as in all others, to both the courts of Berlin and St. James's. But the marquis must be sent to Berlin, and I must request that you will be ready to set out with him this evening."

The sound was a thunder-stroke. "This evening!" when the decisive action of the war was to be fought next morning. "To Berlin!" when all my gallant friends were to be on the march to Paris. I retracted my offer at once. But the prince, not accustomed to be resisted, held his purpose firmly; representing that, as the French general was actually *my* prisoner, and as *my* court was equally

interested with those of the allied powers in preventing his return, "it was my duty, as her commissioner, to see that the measure was effectively performed." Still, the appearance of leaving the army, on the very eve of important service, was not to be argued, or even commanded, away. The duke was equally inflexible, though his sentences were perhaps shorter than mine; and I finally left his presence, declaring that, if the request were persisted in, I should throw up my commission at once, volunteer as a common trooper into the first squadron which would admit me, and then—his highness might, of course, order me wherever he pleased."

A stately smile was the only answer to this tirade. I bowed, and retired.

Within a hundred yards I met my two friends, Vornhorst and Guiscard, and poured out my whole catalogue of wrongs at once. Guiscard neither raged nor smiled, but walked into the ducal tent. After a few minutes he returned. "You have offended the duke desperately," said he, "and, as a sovereign prince, I dare say that banishment from his territories for life would be the least reparation; but, as a general, he thinks that we cannot have too many good troops, and your proposal to take a Hulan's lance and pistol in hand is irresistible. In short, he receives you as a volunteer into his own hussars, and as you are henceforth at his disposal, he orders"——My tormentor here made a malicious pause, which threw me into a fever. I gazed on his countenance, to anticipate his mission. It wore the same deep and moveless expression. "His highness orders that you shall escort, with a squadron, General La Fayette to the chateau, our late head-quarters; there deliver over the Frenchman to an officer of the staff who will be in readiness to escort him further; and in the mean time, if the very fiery and independent M. Marston should have no objection to travel at night, he may return and be in time for whatever is to be done here to-morrow."

"Bravo, bravo!" exclaimed good-natured Vornhorst. "You are the first of negotiators!"

"No," was the quiet reply. "I pretend to nothing more than the art of being a good listener. I merely waited until the duke had spoken his will, and then interposed my

suggestion. It was adopted at once; and now our young friend has only to ride hard to-night, and come to shade his brow with a share of any laurels which we may pluck in the forest of Argonne in the next twenty-four hours."

I was enraptured. The communication was made, but in the most courteous manner, to the marquis. He had at once perceived the difficulties of his position, and was glad to leave them behind as far as possible. Our escort mounted, and within a few minutes we were in full gallop over the fruitful levels of Champagne.

We were soon brought to a stand by a French challenge, and found that we were no longer among the jovial Jägers of Deutschland. We had fallen in with the advanced corps of the emigrant army, under the command of the Prince of Condé.

But here was a new dilemma. Our prisoner's was perhaps the most startling name which could have been pronounced among those high-blooded and headlong men. The army was composed almost wholly of the *noblesse;* and La Fayette, under all the circumstances of births, sentiments, and services, had been the constant theme of their indignation. The champion of the American republic, the leader of the Parisian movement, the commandant of the National Guard, the chief of the rebel army in the field—all this was terribly against him.

Yet no time was to be lost. Leaving the escort to await my return, I rode up the hill alone, and desired an interview with the officer in command of the division. Fortunately I found him one of my gayest Parisian companions, now transformed into a fierce chevalier, *colonel des chasseurs,* bronzed like an Arab, and moustached like a tiger. I communicated my purpose to him as briefly as possible; and we finally arranged that the general should be conveyed unseen to an apartment in the chateau, while I did him and his "*camarades*" the honour of sharing their supper. To this I gave the most willing consent; for a ride of thirty miles had given me the appetite of a hunter.

I was now introduced to a new scene. The room was filled with muskets and knapsacks piled against the walls, and three-fourths of those who sat down were private soldiers. Yet there was scarcely a man among them who did

not wear some decoration, and I heard the noblest names of France everywhere around me.

Among these showy and high-bred soldiers the hour passed delightfully. Anecdotes of every court of Europe, in which most of them had resided either as tourists or envoys; piquant tales of the court; narratives sufficiently contemptuous of the present possessors of power; and *chansons*, some gay and some touching, made us all forget the flight of time. My intelligence that an action was expected on the next day awoke the soldier within them again: the wrongs of their order, the plunders of the ruling faction, their hopeless expatriation if some daring effort were not made, and the hope of triumphant change from exiles to possessors and conquerors, stirred them all into enthusiasm. The army of the allies, the enemy's position, the public feeling of Paris, and the hope of sharing in the honours of an engagement which was to sweep the revolutionary "*canaille*" before the "gentlemen of France," were now the rapid and animating topics. All now were ardent, all eloquent; "fortune was at their feet; the only crime was to doubt"—the only difficulty was to choose in what shape of splendid vengeance, of matchless retribution, of permanent glory, they should restore the tarnished lustre of the diadem, and raise the insulted name of France to its ancient rank among the monarchies of the world. I never heard among men so many vivid boldnesses of speech, so many deep expressions of the heart, so glowing a display of what the heart may unconsciously treasure for the period when some great emotion rouses all its depths, and opens them to the light of day. It was to me a new chapter in the history of man.

CHAPTER XVI.

The news which I had brought of the positions of the armies rendered me an object of marked interest. I was questioned on every point—first, and especially, on the intentions of the commander-in-chief, with the most anxious yet most polished minuteness. But, as on this subject my lips were comparatively sealed, the state of the troops with whom they were so soon to be brought into contact be-

came the more manageable topic. On mentioning that Dumourier was placed in command, I received free and full communications on the subject of his qualities, as the last hope of revolutionary France. One had known him in his early career in the engineers; another had served with him in Corsica; a third had met him at the court of Portugal; the concurring testimony being, that he was a coxcomb of the first water, showy but superficial, and, though personally brave, sure to be bewildered when he found himself for the first time working the wheels and springs of that puzzling machine, an army in the field. "He is a coxcomb, I own," said an old marquis; "but then he is only the fitter to command an army of upstarts. He has seen nothing but Corsican service; well, he is the fitter to command an army of banditti. He has been an *espion* in Portugal; and what better training could he have for heading an army of traitors? Rely upon it, gentlemen, that you have mistaken his character, if you think that he is not the very man whom the mob of Paris *ought* to have chosen for their general. I only recommend that when you go into action you should leave your watches in camp; and, if you charge any of his battalions, look well to your purses."

The old soldier's sally restored our good humour; but the man best acquainted with the French commander-in-chief was my friend the chevalier at the head of the table. "It has singularly enough," said he, "happened to me to have met M. Dumourier in almost every scene of his life. Our first meeting was in the military hospital in Toulouse, where he had been sent, like myself, to recover from the wounds of our last German campaign. Our next meeting was in Portugal. Our minister had adopted some romantic idea of shaking the English influence there; and Dumourier had been sent as an engineer to reconnoitre the defences of the country. His services recommended him to the government, and he was sent to Corsica. There again I met him, as my regiment formed part of the force in the island. He was now high on the staff, our intercourse was renewed, and he was regarded as a very expert diplomatist. A few years after I found him in a still higher situation, a favourite of De Choiseul, and managing the affairs of the

Polish confederation. On his return to Paris he was placed by the minister of war at the head of a commission to reform the military code; thus he has been always distinguished, and has at least enjoyed experience."

Even this slight approach to praise was evidently unpopular among the circle, and I could hear murmurs.

"Distinguished!—yes, but more with the pen than the sword."

"Diplomacy!—the business of a clerk. Command is another affair."

"Mon cher chevalier," said the old marquis, with a laugh, "pray, after being in so many places with him, were you ever with him in the Bastille?" This was followed with a roar of merriment.

I saw my friend's swarthy cheek burn. He started up, and was about to make some fierce retort, when a fine old man, a general, with as many orders as the marquis, and a still whiter head, averted the storm by saying, "Whether the chevalier was with M. Dumourier in that predicament, I know not; but I can say that *I* was. But our companionship was too brief for a perfect union of souls," said he, laughing; "for I was liberated within a week, while he was left behind for, I think, the better part of a year."

"But his talents?" was the question down the table.

"Gentlemen," said the old man, "*my* experience in life has always made me judge of talents by circumstances. If, for example, I find that a man has the talent exactly fitted for his position, I give him credit for all—he had the talent for making the Bastille endurable, and I required no other."

Forty or fifty fine tall fellows now came laughing into the room, flinging down shakos, knapsacks, and sabres, and fully prepared to enjoy the good cheer provided for them. I heard the names of the first families of France among those privates—the Montmorencies, the Lamoignons, the Nivernois, the Rochefoucaults, and De Noailles, "familiar as household words." All was good humour again. They had just had a little adventure in scaring away a corps of the rustic National Guards, who to expedite their escape had flung away their arms, which were brought in as good prize. The festivity and frolic of youth engaged in a cause

which conferred a certain dignity even on their *tours de page*, renewed the pleasantry of the night.

On returning to look for my distinguished prisoner, I found a packet lying on the table of my apartment; it had arrived in my absence with the troops in advance, and I must acknowledge that I opened it with a trembling hand when I saw that it came from London, and Mordecai.

It was written in evident anxiety, and its chief subject was the illness of his daughter. She had some secret on her mind which utterly baffled even the Jew's paternal sagacity. "No letters had reached either of them from France," and he almost implored me to return, or, if that were impossible, to write without delay. "Mariamne had grown more fantastic, more capricious, and more feeble than ever. She had even refused the match which his wish had provided for her, and declared her determination to live, like the daughter of Jephthah, single to her grave."

The letter then turned on my own circumstances, and entered into them with the singular mixture of ardour and sneering which formed this extraordinary character.

"I am doing public business here as indefatigably as if I were robbing nabobs in India, or setting up republics at home. The tardiness of the Horse Guards in your affair is to be moved by nothing but an invasion, and it would be almost as rational to wait the growth of an oak as to wait the signing of your commission; but it shall be done. I have means which can make the tardy quick, and open the eyes of the blind. You *shall* be a subaltern in the Guards, unless you are in too much haste to be a general, and get yourself shot by some Parisian cobbler from behind a hedge. But let me tell you one fact, and I might indorse this piece of intelligence 'secret and confidential' to the English cabinet, for even our great minister has yet to learn it—*the allies will never reach Paris*. Rely and *act* upon this. They might at this moment enter the capital if instead of bayonets they carried only trusses of straw. The road is open before them, but they will look only behind. The war was almost a feint from the beginning. The invasion was the second act of the farce—the retreat will be the third. Poland has been the *true object*, and to cover the substantial seizures there has been the chief trick of the French inva-

sion. In one month from the date of this letter there will not be an Austrian or Prussian cartridge to be found in France. Follow the army so long as it advances, then all is well, and even the experience of service may be of use to you. But the moment you find it come to a stop, turn your horse's head to any point of the compass but the front, and ride to the nearest seaport. The duke is a brave man, and his army is a brave army, but its escape will be only by miracle. You have doubtless been captivated with his wit and his accomplishments. I have known him long and well. But Europe within a month will decry him as a fugitive, a fool, and a dastard. Such is popular justice. Once more I say take care of yourself. The first step in retreat will raise all France against the allies. Ten victories would not cost as much as the first week's march towards the frontier. Be wise in time."

Enclosed was a brief note from Mariamne.

"Sir,—You must not think me dying because I importune you no longer. But *can* you give me any tidings of Lafontaine? I know that he is rash, wild, enthusiastic, but I equally know that he is faithful and true. *Yet* if he *has* forgotten me, or is married, or is anything that as a *preux chevalier* he ought not to be, tell me at once, and you shall see how grateful I can be before I cease to be anything. But if he has fallen—if in the dreadful scenes of Paris Lafontaine is no more—*tell me not.* Write some deluding thing to me—conceal your terrible knowledge. I should not wish to drop down dead before my father's face. He is looking at me while I write this, and I am trying to laugh with a heart as heavy as lead, and eyes that can scarcely see the paper. No—for mercy's sake do not tell me *that he is dead.* Give me gentle words, give me hope, deceive me—as they give laudanum to the dying, not to prolong life, but to lull agony. Do this, and with my last pulse I shall be grateful—with my last breath I shall bless you."

Poor Mariamne! I had at least better hopes than those for her. But within this billet was a third. It was but a few lines, yet at the foot of those lines was the signature—"Clotilde de Tourville." The light almost forsook my eyes, my head swam; if the paper had been a talisman, and

every letter written with the pen of magic, it could not have produced a more powerful effect upon me. My hands trembled and my ears thrilled, and yet it contained but a few unimportant words—an inquiry addressed to Mariamne whether she could forward a letter to the Chateau Montauban in Champagne, or whether her father had any correspondent in the vicinity who could send her the picture of a beloved relative, which in their flight to England they had most reluctantly left behind.

The note at once threw everything else into the background. What were invasions and armies—what were kings and kingdoms—to the slightest wish of the being who had written that billet?

But after the long reverie into which I sank, with the writing of Clotilde in my hand, I recollected that fortune had for once given me the power of meeting the wishes of this noble and beautiful creature. The resemblance of the picture, which had so much perplexed and attracted me, was now explained. I *was* in the Chateau de Montauban, and I now blessed the chance which had sent me to its honoured walls.

To hasten to the chamber where I was again to look upon the exquisite resemblance of features which till then I had thought without a similar in the world, was a matter of instinct, and I at length reached the apartment to which the captive general had been consigned. To my utter astonishment, instead of the silence which I expected under the circumstances, I heard the jingling of glasses and roars of laughter. I entered and found M. La Fayette, indeed, conducting himself with the composure of a personage of his rank, but the other performers exhibiting a totally different temperament. A group of Polish officers, who had formerly borne commissions in the royal service, and now followed the emigrant troops, had recognized La Fayette, and insisted on paying due honours to the "noble comrade" with whom they had served beyond the Atlantic.

My entrance but slightly deranged the symposium, and I was soon furnished with all the freemasonry of the feast by being called upon to do honour to the toast of "His Majesty the King of Great Britain." My duty was now done, my initiation was complete, and while my eyes were

fixed on the portrait which still, in its unharmed beauty, looked beaming on the wild revel below, I heard, in the broken queries and interjectional panegyrics of these hyperborean heroes, more of the history of La Fayette than I had ever expected to reach my ears.

His life had been the strongest contrast to the calm countenance which I saw so tranquilly listen to its own tale. It was Quixotic, and two hundred years ago it could scarcely have escaped the pen of some French Cervantes. He had begun his career as an officer in the French household troops in absolute boyhood. At sixteen he had married; at eighteen he had formed his political principles, and begun his soldiership by crossing the Atlantic and offering his sword to the Republic. To meet the thousand wonderings at his conduct, he haughtily exchanged the ancient motto of the La Fayettes for a new one of his own. The words "Why not?" were his answer to all, and they were sufficient.

In America he was even more republican than the republicans. His zeal was a passion, his love of liberty a romance, his hostility to the power of England a universal scorn of established power.

While this narrative was going on, mingled with bumpers and bursts of Slavonic goodfellowship, I could not help asking myself whether Lavater was not a quack, and physiognomy a folly? Could this be the dashing revolutionist? No plodder at the desk ever wore a more broadcloth countenance: an occasional smile was even the only indication of his interest in jovialities passing around him. But when the conversation turned upon France the man came forth, and he vindicated his political principles with a spirit that told me what he might have been when the blood of youth was added to the glow of imagination.

"What was to be done?" said La Fayette. "France was bankrupt—the treasury was empty—the profligate reign of Louis XV. had at once wasted the wealth, dried up the resources, and corrupted the mind of France. Ministers wrung their hands, the king sent for his confessor, the queen wept—but the nation groaned. In 1787 the Assembly of the Notables was summoned. It was the first time since the reign of Henry IV. France had been

a stern and formal despotism for almost two hundred years. She had seen England extend from an island into an empire—she had seen America extend from a colony into a continent. What had been the worker of the miracle? Liberty! While all the despotisms remained within the boundaries fixed centuries ago, like vast dungeons, never extending and never opening to the light and air, except through the dilapidations of time, I saw England and America spreading like fertile fields, open to every breath of heaven and every beam of day, expanding from year to year by the cheerful labour of man, and every year covered with new productiveness for the use of universal mankind. The leader of the enterprise himself, like the first discoverer of fire, may have been destined only to bring down wrath upon his own head, and be condemned to have his vitals gnawed in loneliness and chains; but nothing shall convince La Fayette that a great work has not been begun for the living race, for all nations, and for all posterity."

I could not suppress the question, "But when will the experiment be complete? When will the tree thus planted in storms take hold of the soil?"

"That must be the legacy to our children," was the reply, in a grave and almost contrite tone. "The works of man are rapid only when they are meant for decay. The American savage builds his wigwam in a week, to last but for a year. The Parthenon took half an age and the treasures of a people, to last for ever."

We parted for the night, and for thirty years. My impression of this remarkable man was that he had more heart than head. Few men have been more misunderstood in his own day or in ours. Lifted to the skies for an hour by popular adulation, he has been sunk into obscurity ever since by historic contempt. Both were mistaken. He was the man made for the time—precisely the middle term between the reign of the nobility and the reign of the populace. Certainly not the man to "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm," but as certainly altogether superior to the indolent luxury of the class among whom he was born. Glory and liberty, the two highest impulses of our common nature, sent him at two-and-twenty from the most splendid court in Europe to the swamps and

snows, the dreary service and dubious battles of America. Eight years of voyages, negotiations, travels, and exposure to the chances of the field, proved his energy, and at the age of thirty he had drawn upon himself the eyes of the world. *There* he ought to have rested or have died. But the Revolution swept him off his feet.

On the breaking-up of the party for the night, my first act was to summon the old Swiss and his wife who had been left in charge of the mansion, and collect from them all that their feeble memories could tell of Clotilde. The chateau had been the retreat of the Maréchale after the death of her husband, and it was in its stately grounds, and in the woods and wilds which surrounded it for many a league, that Clotilde had acquired those accomplished tastes and that characteristic dignity and force of mind which distinguished her from her countrywomen, however elegant and attractive, who had been trained in the *salons* of the court. The green glades and fresh airs of the forest had given beauty to her cheek and grace to her form, and I thanked in soul the fortunate necessity which had driven her from the atmosphere of the Du Barrys to the shades thus sacred to innocence and knowledge.

But the business of the hour was still to be done. The picture was taken down at last, to the great sorrow of the old servants, who seemed to regard it as a patron saint, and who declared that its presence—and its presence alone—could have saved the mansion.

But in the wall which the picture had covered I found a small recess, closed by an iron door, and evidently unknown to the Swiss and his old wife. With a slight pressure against the lock it gave way; the door flew open, and dropped off the hinges, a mass of rust. Within was a casket of a larger size than that generally used for jewels; but my curiosity durst not go beyond the superscription, which was a consignment of the casket by the Maréchale to her banker in London. Whatever might be the contents, it was clear that, like the picture, it had been left behind in the hurry of flight, and that to transmit both to England was fairly within my commission. I hurried off the Swiss with those precious possessions to the next town, in one of the baggage-carts. And then mounting my horse, and

bidding a brief farewell to the brave and noble fellows who were already mustering for the march, and envying me with all their souls, I set off at full speed to rejoin the army.

Yet with all my speed the action had begun some hours before I came in sight of the field. With what pangs of heart I heard the roar of the cannon for league on league, while I was threading my bewildered way and spurring my tired horse through the miry paths of a country alternately marsh and forest! At length, exhausted by mortal fatigue, and ready to lie down and die, I made a last effort. I ordered the troop to halt where they were, pushed on alone, and winding my way through a forest covering the side of a succession of hills, I suddenly burst out into the light, and saw the whole battle beneath, around, and before me. It was magnificent.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE action was a series of those grand manœuvres in which the Prussians excelled all the other troops of Europe. From the spot on which I stood the whole immense plain to the foot of the defiles of Argonne was visible, but the combat, or rather the succession of combats, was fought along the range of hills at the distance of some miles. The chief Prussian force stood in columns in the plain below me, in dark masses, making an occasional movement in advance from time to time, or sending a mounted officer to the troops in action. Parks of artillery lay formed in the spaces between the columns, and the baggage, halting in the wide grounds of what seemed some noble mansion, had already begun to exhibit the appearance of a country fair.

Excepting this busy part of the scene, few things struck me as less like what I had conceived of actual war than the quietude of all before and around me. The landscape was beautiful. Some showery nights had revived the verdure, of which France has so seldom to boast in her autumn, and the green of the plain almost rivalled the delicious verdure of home. The chain of hills, extending

for many a league, was covered with one of the most extensive forests in the kingdom.

But while I lingered gazing on the rich and tranquil luxury of the scene, and almost forgetting that there was war in the world, I was suddenly recalled to a more substantial condition of that world by a trumpet, and the arrival of my troop, who had at length struggled up the hill, evidently surprised at finding me still there, when the sutlers were in full employment within a few hundred yards below me. Their petition was unanimous to be allowed to refresh themselves and their horses at this rare opportunity, and their request, though respectful in its words, was yet so decisive in its tone, that to comply was fully as much my policy as my inclination. I mounted my horse and proceeded, according to the humble "command" of my brave dragoons. This was a most popular movement—the men, the very horses, evidently rejoiced. We were received with all the applause that is given by the sutler to all arrivals with a full purse in the holsters, and a handsome valise, no matter from what source filled, on the croup of the charger. But we had scarcely begun to taste the gifts that fortune had sent us in the shape of huge sausages and brown bread—the *luxuries* for which the soldier of Deutschland woos the goddess of war—when we found ourselves ordered to move off the ground, by the peremptory mandate of a troop of the Royal Guard who had followed our movement, more hungry, more thirsty, and more laced and epauletted than ourselves. While I was deliberating for a moment between the shame of a forced retreat and the awkwardness of our taking the bull by the horns, in the shape of the King's Guard, I heard a loud laugh and my name pronounced. My friend Vornhorst was the man. The indefatigable and good-humoured Vornhorst, who did everything and was everywhere, was soon shaking my hand with the honest grasp of his honest nature, and congratulating me on my return.

I anxiously inquired the news of the army, and the progress of the great operation which was then going on.

"We have beaten everything before us for these three hours," was the answer. "The resistance in the plain was slight, for the French evidently intended to make their

stand only in the forest. But the duke has pushed them strongly on the right flank, and, as you may perceive, the attack goes on in force. The time is come to execute another portion of my orders. What think you of following me and seeing a little of the field?"

"Nothing could delight me more. I am perfectly at your service."

"Then mount, and in five minutes I shall show you one of the first officers in Europe, the Count Clairfait. He is a Walloon, 'tis true; but, for all that, if any man in the army now in the field is fit to succeed to the command, that man is the Count Clairfait. I only wish that he were a Prussian."

"Has he had anything to do in the campaign?"

"Everything that has been done. He has commanded the whole advanced guard of the army, and let me whisper this in your ear—if his advice had been taken a week ago we should by this time have been smoking our cigars in the Palais Royal."

"I am impatient to be introduced to the count—let us mount and ride on." He looked at his watch again.

"Not for ten minutes to come. If I made my appearance before him five minutes in advance of the time appointed by my orders, Clairfait would order me into arrest if I were his grandmother. He is the strictest disciplinarian between this and the North Pole."

"A faultless monster himself, I presume."

"Nearly so; he has but one fault—he is too fond of the sabre and bayonet. Edge and point are good things in their way. But they are the temptations of the general. Frederick's maxim was—'The bullet for the infantry, the spur for the dragoon.' The weight of fire is the true test of infantry, the rapidity of charge the true test of cavalry. The business of a general is manœuvring—to menace masses by greater masses, to throw the weight of an army on a flank, or pierce a centre while the flanks are forced to stand by and see it beaten. But, halt squadron! dress! —advance in parade order!"

While I was thus taking my first lesson in the art of heroes, we had ridden through a deep ravine, from which we struggled our way to a space of more level ground. Our disorder

on reaching it required all the count's ready skill to bring us into a condition fit for the eye of this formidable Walloon. But we were scarcely complete when a group of mounted officers were seen advancing from a column of glittering lances and sabres, which rested on the distant verge of the plain. My friend pronounced the name of Clairfait, and I was soon introduced to the officer who was afterwards to play so distinguished a part in the gallant and melancholy history of the Flemish fields. I had pictured to myself the broad, plump face of the Fleming. I saw a countenance darkened probably by the sultry exposure of his southern campaigns, but of singular depth and power. It was impossible to doubt that within the noble forehead before me was lodged an intelligence of the first order. His manners were cold, yet not uncourteous, and to me he spoke with more than usual attention. But when he alluded to the proceedings of the day, and was informed by Vornhorst that the time appointed for his movement was come, I never saw a more rapid transition from the phlegm of the Netherlander to the vividness of the man of courage and genius. Waiting, with his watch in his hand, for the exact moment appointed in the despatch, it had no sooner arrived than his whole force of Austrian light infantry and cavalry moved forward. Nothing could be more regular than the march for the first half-mile; we then entered a portion of the forest, or rather its border, thinly scattered over an extent of broken country; and to preserve the regularity of our movement soon began to be wholly impossible. The officers gave up the attempt in despair, but the troops enjoyed the disorder in the highest degree. The ground was so intersected with small trenches, cut by the foresters, that every half-dozen yards presented a leap, and the clumps of bushes made it continually necessary to break the ranks. Wherever I looked, I now saw nothing but the animation of an immense skirmish, the use of sabre and pistol alone excepted. Between two and three thousand cavalry, mounted on the finest horses of Austria and Turkey, were galloping in all directions. The whole was like a vast school broke loose for a holiday; the most joyous, sportive, and certainly the most showy, display that had ever met my eye. The view strongly reminded me of some of the magni-

ficent old hunting pieces of Snyders, the field sports of the Archduke Ferdinand. But how infinitely superior in interest! No holiday sport or imperial pageant, but an army rushing into action; one of the great instruments of human power and human change called into full energy; thousands of bold lives about to be perilled; a victory about to be achieved which might fix the fate of Europe; or perhaps losses to be sustained which might cover the future generation with clouds; and all this is on the point of being done. No lazy interval to chill expectancy; within the day, within the hour, nay, within the next five hundred yards, the decisive moment might come.

Still we rushed on, the staff pausing from time to time to listen to the distant cannonade. In one of these pauses, while I had ridden up as near as the broken ground would suffer towards Count Clairfait, he made a gesture to me to look upwards, and I observed, almost for the first time, a smile on his countenance. I followed the gesture, and saw, what to me was the novelty of, a huge shell leisurely, as it seemed, traversing the air. The count and his staff immediately galloped off in all directions; but I had not ridden a hundred yards when the shell dropped into the spot where I had been standing, and burst with a tremendous explosion almost immediately on its touching the ground. The cavalry had dispersed, and the explosion was, I believe, without injury. The yagers were now ordered to clear the way, and a thousand Tyrolese and Transylvanian sharpshooters hurried forward to line the border. A heavy firing commenced, and orders were given to halt the cavalry until the effect of the fire was produced. This was speedily observed; the enemy, evidently in inferior force, and unprepared for this attack, gave way; and the first squadrons which reached the open ground made a dash among them, and took the greater part prisoners.

The whole day was full of splendid exhibitions.

Vornhorst, who had been beside me during the whole day, now exhibited great delight. "I told you," said he, "that Clairfait would turn out well. I see that he has been taught in our school." He pointed to a rising ground, a bluff of the forest ridge, to which a battalion of sharpshooters were hastening; it had seemed destitute of defence,

and the sharpshooters were already beginning to scramble up its sides, when a large body of the enemy which had been covered by the forest, ascended its summit with a shout, and poured down a general volley. The whole Prussian line returned it by one tremendous discharge. The drums and trumpets clanged, and the battalions and squadrons advanced, singing the national hymn. The skirmishers now poured forward, and the battle began. How shall I speak of what I felt at that moment?—the sensation was indescribable! It was mingled of all feelings but personal ones. I was absorbed in that glorious roar, in that bold burst of human struggle, in all that was wild, ardent, and terrible in the power of man. I had not a thought of anything but of the martial pomp and spirit-stirring grandeur of the scene before me.

But I was aroused from my contemplations by the loud laugh of my veteran friend, who was trying the contents of a large brandy flask which I remembered, and with some not very respectful opinion of his temperance, to have seen him place in one of his holsters at our visit to the sutlers. He offered it to me. "You look wretchedly pale," said he; "our style of life is too rough for you gentlemen *diplomats*, and you will find this glass right Nantz—the very best thing, if not the only good thing, that its country has to give." This dislodged me from my heroics at once; the brandy was first-rate, and I found myself restored to the level of the world, and infinitely the better for the operation.

We now followed the advance of the troops. The leading columns had already forced their way into the entrance of the forest; but it was a forest of three leagues in depth and twice the number in length, a wooded province, and the way was to be fought foot by foot. It is only justice to the French to say that they fought well—held the pass boldly—often charged our advance, and gave way only when they were on the point of being surrounded.

As we were standing on the last height at the entrance of the defile, "Look round," exclaimed Vornhorst, "and take your first lesson in our art, if you shall ever adopt the trade of soldiership. The duke has outwitted the Frenchman. I suspected something of that sort in the morning,

when I first heard his guns so far to the right. I allow that any general may be puzzled, for a while, who has five passes to defend, with half a dozen leagues between them, and a Prussian army in front ready to make him choose. He has evidently drawn off the strength of his troops to the duke's point of attack, and has stripped the wing before us. Clairfait's mass has been thrown upon it, and the day is our own. Forward!"

The trampling of horses in our rear, and the arrival of the chasseurs of the ducal escort, now told us that the generalissimo was at hand. He rode up in high spirits, received our congratulations with princely courtesy, and bestowed praises on the troops, and especially on Clairfait, which made the count's dark cheeks and stern features glow. The whole group now rode together, until we reached the open country. A decisive success had unquestionably been gained; and in war the first success is of proverbial importance. On this point the duke laid peculiar weight in the few words which he could spare to me.

"M. Marston," he observed taking me cordially by the hand, "we are henceforth more than friends, we are *camarades*. We have been in the field together; and, with us Prussians, that is a tie for life."

I made my acknowledgments for his highness's condescension. Business then took the lead.

"You will now have a good despatch to transmit to our friends in England. The Count Clairfait has shown himself worthy of his reputation. I understand that the enemy's force consisted chiefly of the household troops of France; if so, we have beaten the best soldiers of the kingdom, and the rest can give us but little trouble. You will remark upon these points; and now for Paris."

A cry, or rather a shout of assent, from the circle of officers echoed the words; and we all put spurs to our horses, and followed the *cortège* through the noble old grove. But, before we reached its confines, the firing had wholly ceased, and the enemy were seen hurrying down the slope of the Argonne, and crossing in great disorder a plain which separated them from their main body.

We supped that night on the green sward. The duke

had invited his own staff, and that of Clairfait, to his tent, in honour of the day; and I never spent a gayer evening. Towards the close of the supper, which, like everything else around him, was worthy of Sardanapalus, he addressed himself to me, and, giving a most gracious personal opinion of what my "services had merited from the English minister," said that, "limited as his own means of rewarding zeal and ability might be, he begged of me to retain a slight memorial of his friendship, and of our day together on the heights of Argonne." Taking from the hand of Guiscard the riband and star of the "Order of Merit," the famous order instituted by the Great Frederick, he placed it round my neck, and proposed my health round the table as a "Knight of Prussia."

This was a flattering distinction. But there is no antidote to vanity equal to an empty purse. If I had been born to one of the leviathan fortunes of our peerage, I might have imagined myself possessed of all the talents of mankind; but I never could forget the grave lesson that I was a younger son. I sat like the Roman in his triumph, with the slave behind to lecture him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

After the repast ended, and the principal part of the guests had withdrawn, I was desired to wait for the communication of important intelligence—Guiscard and Vornhorst being the only officers of the staff who remained. A variety of papers taken in the portfolio of a French general who had fallen in the engagement, were laid before us. They were of every kind, and no bad epitome of the mind of a brave coxcomb. Interspersed with those were epistles of a more tender description, from which it appeared that the general's heart was as capacious as his ambition, and that he contrived to give his admiration to half a dozen of the *élite* of Parisian beauty at a time. Vornhorst was delighted with this portion of the correspondence; even the presence of the duke could not prevent him from bursting into explosions of laughter; and he ended by imploring

its possession, as models of his future correspondence in any emergency which "compelled him to put pen to paper in matters of the sex." But nearly the last of the documents was one deserving of all attention. It was a statement of the measures enjoined by government for raising the population in arms, and, as an appendix, a muster-roll of the various corps already on their way to join the army of Dumourier. The duke read this paper, with a countenance from which all gaiety had vanished, and handed it to Guiscard to read aloud.

"What think you of that, gentlemen?" asked the duke, in his most deliberate tone.

Vornhorst, in his bold and unhesitating style, said, "It tells us only that we shall have some more fighting; but, as we are sure to beat them, the more the better. Your highness knows as well as any man alive that the maxim of our great master was, 'Always begin the war by fighting as many pitched battles as you can. Skirmishes teach discipline to the rabble. Pitched battles are thunderbolts; they finish the business at once; and, like the thunderbolts, they appear to defy resistance by man.'"

"I think," said Guiscard, with his deep physiognomy still darkening, "that we have lost what is the most difficult of all things to recover—time."

The duke bit his lip. "How was it to be helped, Guiscard? *You* know the causes of the delay—they were many and stubborn."

"Ay," was the reply, with an animation which struck me with surprise, "as many as the blockheads in Berlin, and as stubborn as the Aulic council."

"The truth is, M. Marston, as Guiscard says, we *have* lost time, though through no fault of ours. And I observe, from these papers, that the enemy have availed themselves of the delay, by bringing up strong corps from every point. Still, our duty lies plain before us; we *must* advance, and rescue the unfortunate royal family—and we *must* tranquillize France, by overthrowing the rabble influence; we may then retire with the satisfaction of having fought without ambition, and being victorious without a wish for aggrandizement."

Vornhorst's sanguine nature heard this with visible reluc-

tance. "Pardon me, your highness, but my opinion is for instant action, whatever may happen. Let us but move to-morrow morning, and I promise you another battle of Rosbach within the next twelve hours." The idea was congenial to the gallantry of the duke; he smiled, and shook the bold speaker by the hand.

"I see, by these lists," said Guiscard, as he slowly perused the returns, "that the troops with which we have been engaged to-day amounted to little more than twenty thousand men, under their new general, Dumourier. They fought badly, I think. But I scarcely expected that they would have fought at all since the emigration of their officers. Sixteen or eighteen thousand men are already moving up from Flanders—a strong corps under my old acquaintance and countryman, Kellerman—and I should not be surprised to find that we rather under than over calculated the force which will be in line against us within a week."

"So be it!" exclaimed Vornhorst. "What are troops without discipline, and generals without science? Both made to be beaten. Fifty thousand Prussians would march through Europe. I am for the advance. We have turned the position, and taken a thousand prisoners, and guns. Our men are in high spirits; and, if I were in command of a corps to-morrow, my only countersign would be 'Paris.'"

"Vornhorst," said the duke, "you have only anticipated my intention with regard to yourself. You shall have a command; the three brigades of Prussian grenadiers shall be given into your charge; and you shall operate on the flank."

Vornhorst's gratitude almost denied him words; but his countenance always spoke better than his tongue.

One of those papers contained a detail of several projects by the leading members of the Assembly for the government of France. Guiscard, after bending his wise head over them, pronounced them all equally futile, and equally tending to democracy. The duke was of the opposite opinion, and after a glance at the papers observed "that he thought some of those schemes ingenious; but that they so closely resembled the ideas thrown out in Germany,

under the patronage of the emperor Joseph, as to deprive them of any strong claim to originality. No," said he gaily, "I shall never believe that Frenchmen are changed until I hear that there is no ballet in Paris; you might as well tell me that the Swiss will abjure the money which makes a part of his definition, as the Frenchman give up the laced coat, the powdered queue, and the order of St. Louis at his button-hole. Those things are the man, they are his mind, his senses, himself." Still, our long-headed friend, Guiscard, was not to be convinced."

"I have every contempt," said he, in a hurried tone, "for the shallowness of mob-orators, attempting to mould men by theories; but the question, whether France is to remain a monarchy or not, is one of the most pressing importance to your highness's operations. It is only in this practical sense that I should think of the topic at all. You have taken the frontier towns, and have beaten the frontier army. So far as the regular force of France is concerned, the war is at an end. But then comes the grand point—a country of thirty millions of people cannot be conquered, if they can but be roused to resist. I recollect no instance in European history where an established kingdom was conquered by invasion. They all stand at this hour as they stood a thousand years ago. In France we have found the people without leaders, and the troops without experience; of course they have not resisted our hussars and guns. But—they have not joined us. The French farmer shuts up his house; the peasant flies; the citizen barricades his gates, and gives us cannon-shot for answer. The whole land rejects us, if it dares not repel; and, if we conquer, we shall have to colonize."

"Well, we must fight them into it," said Vornhorst.

"Or leave them to fight themselves out of it," I observed —"my national prejudices are not favourable to reasoning at the point of the bayonet."

"Or take the chances of the world, and float on wherever the surge carries us," laughed the duke.

But Guiscard was still inflexible. Of course, at this distance of time, I can offer but a faint trace of his bold and almost prophetic wisdom.

"I see no result for France but a democracy. This war

is like no other since the fall of the Roman empire. It is a war of the passions. What man can calculate the power of those untried elements? I implore your highness to consider with the deepest caution every step to be taken from this moment. Europe has no commander whom it can place in a rank with yourself; and if you, at the head of the first army of Europe, shall find it necessary to retreat before the peasantry of France, it will form a disastrous era in the art of war, and a still more disastrous omen to every crowned head of Europe."

The duke looked uneasy. But he merely said with a smile, "My dear Guiscard, we must keep these sentiments to ourselves in camp. Like myself, you have dined and supped with the Diderots and Raynals—pleasant people, no doubt, but dangerous advisers."

"I have!" exclaimed his excited hearer; "and neither I nor any other man could have met them without admiring their talents."

"Our question is simply one of fact," said the duke.

"Yes, but of a fact on which the fate of Europe hinges at this moment! The monarchy of France is already cloven down. What shape of power is now to take up its fallen sword? The sovereignty of time, laws, and loyalty, is in the grave, and the funeral rites will be bloody; but what hand is to make the ground of that grave firm enough to bear the foundations of a new throne?"

"The heels of our boots and the hoofs of our horses—they will trample it solid enough!" exclaimed Vornhorst.

"The much stronger probability is," replied Guiscard, "that they will trample it into a mire, so deep that we may reckon the allied powers fortunate if they ever escape from it. France is revolutionized irrecoverably. But the pressing point for us is, how the Revolution will act upon the military spirit of the nation. The French may succumb; but they make good soldiers. They are the only nation in Europe who, in spite of all their defeats, regard war as their natural path to power."

"Yet they fly before our squadrons," observed the duke.

"Yes, as schoolboys fly before their master, until they are strong enough to rebel, or as the Indians fled before the lances and horses of Cortez, until they became accustomed

to them. 'It would be infinitely wiser to leave the republicans to struggle with each other than to unite them by a national attack. Mobs, like the wolves, always fall upon the wounded."

The sound of a gun reminded us that the hour of the evening hymn had come. It broke up our council. The incomparable harmony of so many thousand voices again ascended into the air, and at the discharge of another gun all was still once more. The night had now fallen, and the fatigues of the day made repose welcome. But the conversation of the last hour made me anxious to obtain all the knowledge of the country, and of the campaign, which could be obtained from Guiscard.

He still persisted in his conviction "that we had come at the wrong time—it was either too early or too late—*before* the nation had grown weary of anarchy, and *after* they had triumphed over the throne. The rebound," said he, energetically, "will be terrible."

A sudden harmony of trumpets from various points of the vast encampment pierced the ear, and in another moment the whole line of the hills was crowned with flame. The signal for lighting the fires of the Austrian and Prussian outposts had been given, and the effect was almost magical. In this army all things were done with a regularity almost perfect. The trumpet spoke, and the answer was instantaneous.

All was calm and odorous. The flourish of the evening trumpets still continued to swell in the rich harmonies which German skill alone can breathe, and thoughts of the past and the future began to steal over my mind. I was once more in England gazing on the splendid beauty of Clotilde, and again imagining the thousand forms in which my weary fortunes must be shaped before I dared to offer her a share in my hopes of happiness. Then came a vision of my early home. The halls of Mortimer Castle—the feebly surviving parent there whom I still loved—the heartless and haughty brother—the pomp and pageantry to which he was born, while I was flung out into the wilderness, like the son of the handmaid, to perish, or, like him, escape only by miracle. But while I was thus sinking in heart, my hand, in some unconscious movement, struck

the badge of Frederick's order on my bosom. What trifles change the current of human thoughts! That "star" threw more light over my darkness than the thousand constellations which studded the vault above my head. Success and public name again filled my mind. I saw things, events, and persons through a brilliant haze of hope, and, determining to follow fortune wherever she might lead me, abjured all remembrance of calamity in my unfriended yet resolute career.

The galloping of horses aroused me. It was Guiscard with an escort. "What! not in your bed yet?" was his hurried salutation. "So much the better; you *will* have a showy despatch to send to England to-morrow. Clairfait has just outdone himself. He found the French retreating, and he followed them without loss of time. His troops had been so dispersed by the service of the day that he could collect but fifteen hundred hussars, and with these he gallantly set forth to pick up stragglers. His old acquaintance, Chazot, whom he had beaten the day before, was in command of a rear-guard of ten thousand men. His fifteen hundred brave fellows were now exposed to ruin, and doubtless, if they had exhibited any symptom of retreating, they must have been ruined. But here Clarfait's *à la Turque* style was exactly in place. He ordered that not a shot should be fired, but that the spur and sabre should do the business, and at once plunged into the mass of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. In five minutes the whole were put to the rout, guns, baggage, and ammunition taken; and the French general-in-chief was as much stripped of his rear-guard as ever was peacock plucked of his tail."

"Will the duke follow up the blow?" was my inquiry.

"Beyond all doubt. I have just left him giving orders for the advance of the whole line at daybreak; and unless M. Dumourier is remarkably on the alert, we shall have him supping in camp within the next twenty-four hours."

"Excellent news! You and Vornhorst will be field-marshals before the campaign is over." His countenance changed.

"No, my course unfortunately lies in a different direction. The duke has been so perplexed by the delays continually forced upon him by the cabinets that he has been

more than once on the point of giving up the command. Clairfait's success and the prospect of cutting off the retreat of the French, or of getting between them and Paris, have furnished him with new materials, and I am now on my way to Berlin to put matters in the proper point of view. Farewell, Marston; I am sorry to lose you as a comrade, but we *must* meet again, though no laurels for *me* now. The duke must not find me here; he will pass by within the next few minutes. Farewell!"

The noble fellow sprang from his horse, and shook my hand with a fervour which I had not thought to be in his calm and lofty nature.

"Farewell!" he uttered once more, threw himself on the saddle, and was gone.

I had scarcely lost the sound of his horse's hoofs as they rattled up the stony ravine of the hill, when the sound of a body of cavalry announced the approach of the generalissimo. He rode up and addressed me with his usual courtesy. "I really am afraid, Mr. Marston, that you will think me in a conspiracy to prevent your enjoying a night's rest. I must visit the troops of the left wing without delay—we can converse on the way."

I was all obedience—"a knight of Prussia, and therefore at his highness's service."

"Well, well, I thought so. You English gentlemen are ready for everything. In the mean time, while your horse is saddling, look over this letter. That was a gallant attempt of Clairfait's, and if we had not been too far off to support him, we might have pounced upon the main body as effectually as he did upon the rear. Chazot has escaped, but one of M. Dumourier's aides-de-camp, a remarkably intelligent fellow, has been taken, and on him has been found the paper which I beg you to peruse."

It was a letter from the commander-in-chief for the *Bureau de la Guerre* in Paris.

"Monsieur le Ministre,—I write this after having been on horseback for eighteen hours. We must have reinforcements without a moment's delay, or we are lost—the honour of France is lost—France herself is lost. I have with me less than 20,000 men to defend the road to Paris against 100,000. The truth must be told—truth becomes

a citizen. We have been beaten! I have been unable to hold the passes of Argonne, and the enemy's hussars are already scouring the country in my rear. I have sent order upon order to Kellerman, and all his answer is that he is preparing to advance, but he has not stirred a step. I dare say that he is playing at tric-trac at Mentz this moment." The letter then gave details.

"My march from the Argonne has been a bold manœuvre, but it has cost us something. Chazot, to whom I intrusted the protection of the march, and to whom I had given the strictest orders to keep the enemy's light troops at a distance, has suffered himself to be entrapped by those experienced campaigners, and has lost men. Duval fought bravely at the head of his brigade, and Miranda narrowly escaped being taken, in a dashing attempt to save the park of artillery. He had a horse killed under him, and was carried from the field. Macdonald, who takes this, will explain more. He is a promising officer—give him a step. In the mean time send me every man that you can. *France is in danger.*"

"The object now," observed the duke, "will be to press upon the enemy. And now forward!"

I mounted, and we rode through the camp—the duke occasionally giving some order for the morning to the officers commanding the successive divisions, and conversing with me on the points in discussion between England and the allies.

"The king and the emperor are both sincere, but that is more than I can always say for those about them. We have too many Italians, and even Frenchmen, at our German courts. They are republicans to a man, and in consequence every important measure is betrayed. I can perceive in the manœuvring of the enemy's general that he must have been acquainted with my last despatch from Berlin, and I am so thoroughly persuaded of the fact that I mean to manœuvre to-morrow on that conviction. The order from Berlin is that I shall act upon his flanks. Well, then, within two hours after daylight I shall make a push for his centre, and breaking through that shall separate his wings, and crush them at my leisure."

The well-preserved game of this huge hunting-ground,

the old vexation of the French peasant, now fell into hands which had no fear of the galleys for a shot at a wild boar, or bringing down a partridge. The fires exhibited many a substantial specimen of forest luxury in the act of preparation. No man enjoys rest and food like the soldier. A day's fighting and fasting gives a sense of delight to both, such as the man of cities can scarcely conceive.

An officer of the staff now rode up to make a report on some movement of the division intended to lead in the morning, and the duke gave me permission to retire. He galloped off in the direction of the column, and I slowly pursued my way to my quarters. Yet I could not resist many a halt to gaze on the singular beauty of the bursts of flame which lighted the landscape. More than once they reminded me of the famous Homeric description of the Trojan bivouac by the ships. All the images were the same, except that for the sea we had the endless meadows of Champagne, and for the ships the tents of the enemy. We had the fires, the exulting troops, the carouse, the picketed horses, the shouts and songs, the lustre of the autumnal sky, and the bold longings for victory and the dawn.

CHAPTER XIX.

I LEAVE it to others to give the history of this campaign, one of the most memorable of Europe from its consequences. The tramp of that army roused the slumbering giant of France. I was on horseback before daybreak, and marched in the midst of columns which had no more doubt of beating up the enemy's quarters than they had of eating their first meal. All were in the highest spirits; and the opinions of the staff, among whom the duke had assigned me a place, were so sanguine that I felt some concern at their reaching the ear of the captive aide-de-camp. This induced me to draw him away gradually from the crowd.

"I admit," said he, "that you have beaten us: but this is the natural effect of your incomparable discipline. Our army is new, our general new, everything new but our imprudence in venturing to meet your 100,000 with our

25,000. Yet France is not beaten. In fact, you have not met the French up to this hour. The men before you have never seen more service than they could find in a cabaret quarrel, or in hunting a highwayman. Some of them, I admit, have served their king in the shape of shouldering their muskets at his palace-gates in Versailles, or marching in a procession of cardinals and confessors to Notre Dame. My astonishment is, that at the first shot they did not all run to their soup, and at the second leave their muskets to take care of themselves. But they are brave; and if they once learn to fight, the pupils may beat the master."

"You are a philosopher, monsieur, but I hope no prophet. I think I observe in you something of our English blood after all. You have opinions, and you speak them."

"Not quite English, nor yet quite French. My father was a Briton, but a borderer, so not even exactly either English or Scotch. He took up arms for the son of James—of course was ruined, as every one was who had to with a Stuart, from the beginning of time—luckily escaped, after the crash of Culloden, entered the Scottish brigade here, and left me nothing but his memory, his sword, and the untarnished name of Macdonald." I bowed to a name so connected with honour; and the lively aide-de-camp and I became from that moment fast friends. After a long and fatiguing march, in one of the most sultry days of the year, our advanced guard reached the front of the enemy's position. The outposts were driven in at once; and the whole army, as it came up, was formed in order of battle. Rumours had been spread of large reinforcements being on their way to the enemy; the clouds of dust which rose along the plain, and the growing sound of baggage wagons and heavy guns behind the hills, rendered it probable. The masses, the shouts, the rapidity of the movements—the galloping of the cavalry—the rolling of the parks of artillery—the rush of the light troops—the pressing march of the battalions—and all glittering with all the pomps of waving standards, flashing sabres, and columns of bayonets that looked like sheets of steel.

The attack now commenced along the line, and the resistance was evidently serious. A heavy fire was sustained for some time; but the troops gradually established

themselves on the lower part of the range. "I know it all now!" exclaimed my agitated companion, after a long look through my glass: "it is Kellerman's corps, which ought to have been a league to the rear of its present position at this moment. He must have received counter-orders since I left him, or been desperately deceived; another half-hour there, and he will never leave those hills but a prisoner or a corpse." From the shaking of his bridle, and the nervous quivering of his manly countenance, I saw how eagerly he would have received permission to bring the French general out of his dilemma. But he was a man of honour, and I was sure of him. In the midst of a thunder of cannon, which seemed to shake the ground under our feet, the firing suddenly ceased on the enemy's side. The cessation was followed on ours; there was an extraordinary silence over the field, and probably the generalissimo expected a flag of truce, or some proposal for the capitulation of the enemy's corps. But none came; and after a pause, in which aides-de-camp and orderlies were continually galloping between the advance and the spot where the duke stood at the head of his staff, the line moved on again, and the hill was in our possession. But Kellerman was gone; and before our light troops could make any impression on the squadrons which covered the movement, he had again taken up a position on that formidable ground which was destined to figure so memorably in the annals of French soldiership, the heights of Valmy.

"What think you now, my friend?" was my question.

"Just what I thought before," was the answer. "Kellerman may have deceived himself in his first position, but he has evidently retrieved his error. He has now shortened his distance from his reinforcements, and has secured one of the strongest positions in the country. You may drive him out of it before nightfall; but you might as well storm Ehrenbreitstein, or your own Gibraltar, by morning."

"Well, the experiment is about to be made, for my glass shows me our howitzers *en masse* moving up to salute him with grape and canister."

"Whether Kellerman can manœuvre, I do not know; but that he will fight, I am perfectly sure. He is old, but one of the steadiest officers in our service. If it is in his

orders to maintain those heights, he will hold them to his last cartridge and his last man."

Our conversation was now lost in the roar of artillery; and after a tremendous fire of an hour on the French position, which was answered with equal weight from the heights, a strong division was sent to assail the principal battery. The attempt was gallantly made, and the success seemed infallible, when I heard through all the roar the exclamation of Macdonald, "Brave Steingell!" At the words, he pointed to a heavy column of infantry hurrying down the ravine in rear of the redoubt.

"Those are from the camp," he exclaimed, "and a few thousands more will make the post impregnable."

The sight of the column seemed to have given renewed vigour to both sides; for while the French guns rapidly increased their fire, aided by the musketry of the newly-arrived troops, the Prussian artillerists, then the first in Europe, threw their shot in such showers that the forest, which had hitherto largely screened the enemy, began to fall in masses; branch and trunk were swept away, and the ground became as naked of cover as if it had been stripped by the axe. The troops thus exposed could not withstand this "iron hail," and they were palpably staggered. At length the retreat of a brigade after suffering immense loss shook the whole line, and produced a charge of our dragoons up the hill. I gave an involuntary glance at Macdonald. He was pale and exhausted, but in another moment his eye sparkled, his colour came, and I heard him almost unconsciously exclaim, "Bravo, Chazot! All is not lost yet." I saw a group of mounted officers galloping into the very spot which had been abandoned by the brigade, and followed by the colours of three or four battalions, which were planted directly under our fire. "There comes Chazot with his division!" cried the aide-de-camp; "gallant fellow! let him now make up for his ill fortune. Monsieur Brunswick will not sleep on the hill of Valmy to-night. He has been unable to force the centre, and now both flanks are secured: another attack would cost him ten thousand men. *Vive la France!*"

The prediction was nearly true. The fire soon slackened, the troops were withdrawn, and, after a heavy loss on both sides, both slept upon the field.

I was roused at midnight from the deep sleep of fatigue by an order to attend the duke, who was then holding a council. Vornhorst was my summoner, and on our way he slightly explained the purpose of his mission.

"What calls the council to-night?"

"My good friend," said Vornhorst with a grave smile, which more reminded me of Guiscard, "remember the Arab apologue,—that every man is born with two strings tied to him: one large and visible, but made of twisted feathers; the other so fine as to be invisible, but made of twisted steel. Thus there are few men without a visible motive which all can see, and an invisible, one which, however, pulls them just as the puller pleases. Berlin pulls now, and the duke's glory and the good of Europe will be sacrificed to policy."

"But will the king suffer this? Will the emperor stand by and see this done?"

"They are both zealous for the liberation of the unfortunate royal family. But, *entre nous*—and this is a secret which I scarcely dare whisper even in a French desert—their councillors have other ideas. Poland is the prize to which the ministers of both courts look. They know that the permanent possession of French provinces is impossible. The consequence is that a negotiation is on foot at this hour to conclude the war by treaty, and, having ensured the safety of the royal family, to withdraw the army into Lorraine."

"Why then am I summoned?"

"To put your signature to the preliminaries."

I started with indignation. "They shall wait long if they wait till I sign them. I shall not attend this council."

"Observe," said Vornhorst, "I have spoken only on conjecture. If I return without you, my candour will be rewarded by an instant sentence for Spandau."

This decided me, and we rode together to the council. It was of a more formal nature than I had yet witnessed. Two officers expressly sent from Vienna and Berlin, military envoys, had brought the decisions of their respective cabinets upon the crisis. The duke said little. He had lost his gay nonchalance of manner, and was palpably dispirited and disappointed. His address to me was as gracious as

ever, but it was more of the diplomatist and less of the soldier. Our sitting closed with a resolution to agree upon an armistice, and to make the immediate release of the royal family one of the stipulations. I placed in the strongest light that I could the immense impulse which any pause in our advance must give to the revolutionary spirit in France. I was overruled. The proposal for the armistice was signed by all present but one—that one myself.

All was now over, and I thought only of returning to my post at Paris. The armistice was regarded as a national triumph. By the electric change of public opinion in this most electric of all countries, every man in France was a soldier, and every soldier a hero. This was the miracle of twenty-four hours. Dumourier's force instantly swelled to 100,000 men. He might have had a million if he had asked for them.

After a week of this most harassing warfare, in which we lost ten times the number of men which it would have cost to march over the bodies of Dumourier's army to the capital, the order was issued for a general retreat to the frontier. I remembered Mordecai's letter, but it was now too late. Even if I could have turned my horse's head to a French port, I felt myself bound to share the fortunes of the gallant army to which I had been so closely attached. In the heat of youth I went even further, and, as my mission had virtually ceased and I wore a Prussian order, I took the *un*diplomatic step of proposing to act as one of the duke's aides-de-camp until the army had left the enemy's territory. Behold me now a hulan of the duke's guard!

I found no reason to repent my choice, though our service was remarkably severe. The peasant war was chiefly against the light troops and irregulars of the retreating army, the columns being too formidable to admit of attack by the multitude. Forty thousand men of the main army of France were appointed to the duty of "seeing us out of the country." But every attempt at foraging, every movement beyond the range of our cannon, was instantly met by a peasant skirmish. Every village exhibited a barricade from which we were fired on, every forest produced a succession of sharp encounters, and the passage of every river required as much precaution as if we were at open war.

But an enemy more fearful than the peasantry began to show itself. The weather had changed to storms of rain and bitter wind; the plains of Champagne, never famed for fertility, were now as wild and bare as a Russian steppe. The worst provisions supplied on the narrowest scale—above all, disgust, the most fatal canker of the soldier's soul—spread disease among the ranks, and the roads on which we followed the march gave terrible evidence of the havoc. The mortality at last became so great that it seemed not unlikely that the whole army would thus melt away before it reached the boundary of this land of death.

The horror of the scene even struck the enemy; and whether through fear of the contagion, or through the uselessness of hunting down men who were treading to the grave by thousands, the peasantry ceased to follow us. Yet such was the wretchedness of that hideous progress, that this cessation of hostility was scarcely a relief. Our buoyant and brilliant career was at an end; the light troops were now only the mutes and mourners of a funeral procession of 70,000 men.

I still look back with an indescribable shudder at the scenes which we were compelled to witness from day to day during that month of misery; for the march, which began in the first days of October, was protracted till its end. I had kept up my spirits when many a more vigorous frame had sunk, and many a maturer mind had desponded; but the perpetual recurrence of the same dreary spectacles sank into my soul. Many a night I lay down beside my starving charger with something of a hope that I should never see another morning; and many a morning, when I dragged my feeble limbs from the cold and wet ground, I looked round the horizon for the approach of some enemy's squadron, or peasant band, which might give me an honourable chance of escape from an existence now no longer endurable. But all was in vain. For leagues round no living object was visible, except that long column, silently and slowly winding on through the distance, like an army of spectres.

My diminished squadron had at length become almost the only rear-guard. From a hundred and fifty as fine fellows as ever sat a charger, we were now reduced to a

third. All its officers, youths of the first families of Prussia, had either been left behind, dying in the villages, or had been laid in their graves by the road-side, and I was now the only commandant. Perhaps even this circumstance was the means of saving my life. My new responsibility compelled me to make some exertion; and I felt that, live or die, I might still earn an honourable name. Even in those darkest hours, the thought that Clotilde might ask where and how I finished my ill-fortuned career, or that she gave a moment's sorrow to one who remembered her to the last, had its share in restoring me to the world. In that fond frenzy I wrote down my feelings, wild as they were—my impossible hopes, my inextinguishable affection, my dying devotement to her image; finishing with a promise to watch over her. Placing the paper in my bosom, with a locket containing a ringlet of her beautiful hair, which Mariamne had contrived to obtain for me, I felt as if I had done my last duty among mankind.

Still we wandered on, through a country which had the look of a boundless cemetery. It was the intensity of desolation.

We seemed even to make no progress. We all began to think that the scene would never change. But one evening, when the troop had lain down under the shelter of a knoll, my sergeant, a fine Hungarian, whose eyes had been sharpened by hussar service on the Turkish border, roused me, saying that he had discovered French horse-tracks in advance of us. We were all quickly on the alert; the horse-tracks were found to be numerous, and it was evident that a strong body of the enemy's cavalry had managed to get in between us and the army. We were on horseback immediately. The track led us along the high-road for one or two leagues, and then turned off towards a village on a height at some distance. We now paused, and the question was, whether to follow the enemy, or to rest ourselves and our tired horses for the night. But we had scarcely come to the decision of unloosing girths when the sky above the village showed a sudden glow; and a confused clamour of voices came upon the wind. Despatching an orderly to the duke, to inform him of the French movement, we now rode towards the village. We found the road in its immediate

neighbourhood covered with fugitives, who, however, instead of flying from us, with the usual horror of the peasantry, hung on our bridles, and implored us, with every wild gesticulation, to hasten to the gates. All that I could learn from the outcries of men, women, and children, was that their village, or rather town—for we found it of considerable size—had been the quarters of some of the Austrian cavalry, and that the officers had given a ball, to which the leading families had been invited. The ball was charged as a national crime by the democrats in Paris, and a regiment of horse had been sent to punish those unfortunate people.

While I pondered for a moment on our want of means, a fine old man, with his white hair stained with blood from a sabre-wound in his forehead, clung to my charger's neck, and implored me, by the honour of soldiership, to make but one effort against the revolutionary brigands, as he termed them. "I am a French officer and a noble!" he exclaimed—"I have served my king, I have a son in the army of Condé, and now the wretches have seized on my only daughter, my Amalie, and they are carrying her to their accursed guillotine."

I could resist no longer; yet I looked round despairingly at my force. "Follow me," said the agonized old man; "one half of the villains are drunk in the *cafés* already, the other half are busy in that horrid procession to the axe. I shall take you by a private way, and you may fall upon them by surprise. You shall find me, and all who belong to me, sword in hand by your side. Come on; and the God of battles, and protector of the unhappy, will give you victory." I saw tears fall down some of our bronzed faces, and I had but one word to utter; but that was—"Forward!" We followed our guide swiftly and silently through the narrow streets, and then, suddenly emerging into the public square, saw such a sight of public terror as never before met my eyes.

The market-place was lighted up, and filled with dragoons. Leaving my hulans under cover of a dark street, and riding forward to reconnoitre, I saw with astonishment the utter carelessness with which they abandoned themselves to their indulgences in the midst of an irritated population. Some

were drinking on horseback, some had thrown themselves on the benches of the market-place, and were evidently intoxicated. The people stood at the corners of the streets, looking on, palpably in terror, yet as palpably indignant at the outrage of the military. From the blaze in some of the windows, and the shrieks of females, I could perceive that plunder was going on. Yet a strong body of cavalry, mounted in the middle of the square, and keeping guard round a wagon on which a guillotine had been already erected, still made me think an attack hopeless. I felt my horse's bridle pulled, and saw the old noble. "Now or never!" he cried, in a voice almost choked with emotion. "Those are for the guillotine—barbarians! brigands!—they will murder my Amalie." He sank before me. "What! is this an execution?" I exclaimed. His answer was scarcely above a whisper, for he seemed fainting. "The villains have been sent," said he, "to burn the town; they have seized the children of our best families, compelled them to dress as they were dressed for the Prussian ball, and are now about to murder them by their accursed guillotine." Pointing to one lovely girl, who, pale as a spectre, stood in the foremost of those vehicles of death, he exclaimed, "Amalie! O my Amalie!"

The cart was already within a few feet of the scaffold, when I gave the word to my troopers. The brave fellows answered my "Forward!" with a shout, charged sabre in hand, and in an instant had thrown themselves between the victims and the guillotine. Their escort, taken completely by surprise, was broken at the first shock; we dashed without loss of time on the squadrons scattered round the market, and swept it clear of them. Our success was complete. The regiment, intoxicated, and unacquainted with our force—which they probably thought to be the advance of the whole Prussian cavalry—after having lost many men, for the peasantry showed no mercy on the dismounted, turned at full gallop into the open country. The townspeople now performed their part. The victims were hurried away by their families, in lamentations and rejoicings, tears and kisses.

After having appeased our hunger and that of our famishing horses, and being offered all the purses which the

French dragoons had left them, we finished the exploit by a general cheer in honour of the ladies, and marched on our route, followed by the prayers of the whole community.

Yet what, as the poet Saadi says, is fortune, "but a peacock, a showy tail on a frightful pair of legs?" Our triumph was to be suddenly followed by a reverse. The burgundy and champagne of the old count's cellar had made us festive, and our voices were heard along the road with a gaiety imprudent in a hostile land. The sound of a trumpet in our front brought us to our senses and a dead stand. But we were in a vein of heroism. The word was given, and the spur carried us through a strong line of cavalry posted across the road. There was now no resource but to return as we went, which we did at full speed, and again crushed our antagonists. But there again we saw squadron after squadron blocking up the road. All was now desperate. We made a plunge at our living circumvallation; but the French dragoons had now learned common sense—they opened for us, and, when we were once fairly in, enveloped us completely: it was then a troop to a brigade,—fifty jaded men and horses to fifteen hundred fresh from camp. What happened further I know not. I saw for a minute or two a great deal of pistol-firing and a great deal of sabre-clashing; I felt my horse stagger under me, at the moment when I aimed a blow at a gigantic cuirassier; a pistol exploded close to my ear as I was going down; and I heard no more.

CHAPTER XX.

On opening my eyes again, I found the scene strangely altered. I was lying in a little chamber furnished with Parisian elegance—a sufficient contrast to a sky dark as pitch, or only illumined by carbines and the sparkles of sabres delving at each other. I was lying on an embroidered sofa, an equally strongco ntrast to my position among the bodies of fallen men and the heels of plunging horses. A showy Turkish cloak, or *robe de chambre*, had superseded my tarnished jacket. I was completely altered as a warrior; and, from the glance which I cast on a mirror

surrounded with gilded nymphs and swains enough to have furnished a ballet, I saw in my haggard countenance, and a wound across my forehead which a riband but half concealed, that I was not less altered as a man.

But my reveries were broken by a sharp voice in the outer chamber insisting on an entrance into mine, and replied to by a weak and garrulous female one refusing the admission. The dialogue was something of this order:—

"Strong or weak, well or ill, able or not able, I must send him, before twelve o'clock to night, to Paris."

"But the poor gentleman's wounds are still unhealed."

"Still he must set out. The '*malle poste*' will be at the door; and if he had fifty wounds on him he must go. The marquis is halfway to Paris by this time, perhaps more than halfway to the guillotine."

This was followed by a burst of sobs from the female, whom I discovered, by her sorrowing confessions, to have been a nurse in the family.

"Well," was the ruffian's reply, "women of all ages are fools; what is it to you whether this young fellow is shot or hanged? He was taken in arms against the Republic, one and indivisible. All the enemies of France must perish! That is the decree."

The old woman now partially opened the door, to see whether I slept; and I closed my eyes, for the purpose of hearing all that was to be heard without interruption. The speaker, whom I alternately took for the *gendarme* of the district and the executioner, gave vent to his swelling soul in the national style.

"*Ventre, Saint Gris!* I am an ill-used man. What! leave *me!* leave Jean Jaques Louis Gilet in charge of this wretched aristocrat! while I should be marching with my battalion, and at its head, too, if merit met its reward, to sweep the foes of the Republic from the face of the earth. No; I shall not remain in this paltry place, a village functionary, when I ought to be on the highest bench of justice."

As his harangue glowed, his pace quickened, and his voice grew more vehement, until, probably impatient of the time which lay between him and the first offices of the

Republic, he overpowered the resistance of the nurse, and burst into the chamber. Throwing himself into a theatrical attitude before a mirror—for what Frenchman ever passes one without a glance of happy recognition?—"Rise, aristocrat!" he cried, in the tone of Talma in "Brutus," calling up the shade of Cæsar. "Rise, and account to the world for your crimes against the liberty of man!"

I looked with such surprise on this champion of the sons of Adam—a little meagre creature, who seemed to be shaped on the model of one of his own pens, stripped, withered, and ink-dried—that I actually burst into laughter. His indignation rose, and pulling out a pistol with one hand, and a roll of paper from his bosom with the other, he presented them together. I perceived, as I lay on my pillow, that the pistol was without a lock, and thus was comforted; but the paper was of a more formidable description. It was the famous decree of "Fraternization," by which France declared "that she would grant succour to every people who wished to recover their liberty," and commanded her generals "to aid all such, and to defend all citizens who might be troubled in the cause of freedom."

This paper indeed startled me; for it was the consummation which I had dreaded so long. I saw at once that France, in those wild words, had declared war against every throne in Europe, and that we were now beginning the era of struggle and suffering which Mordecai's strong sense had predicted, and of which no human sagacity could foresee the end. My countenance probably showed the impression which this European anathema had made upon me; for Monsieur Gilet became more heroic than ever. I was too feeble to turn him out of the room, and too contemptuous to reply. But his overthrow was not the further off. The old nurse, who still retained some of the sinews and all the irritability of a stout Champenaise peasant, watched her opportunity, made a spring at him like a wild cat, wrested the sabre from his hand, and, grasping the struggling and screaming little functionary in her strong arms, carried him like a child out of the room.

She then returned, and, having locked the door to prevent a second inroad, sat down by my couch, and, with the usual

passion of women after strong excitement, burst into exclamations and tears. What I could collect from her broken narrative was little more than the common-place of national misery in that fearful time. She had been a servant in the family of the noble whose daughter I had saved from death. She had been the nurse of the young countess; and all the blessings that sorrow and gratitude ever gathered together could not be exceeded by the praises which she poured upon my head. On its being rumoured in the town that I was attacked and killed by a body of cavalry sent to revenge their comrades, the Marquis Lanfranc—I now first learned the name of my entertainer—had gone to look for my remains in the field. I was found still breathing, and, to avoid further danger, was carried to this dwelling, a hunting-lodge in the heart of the forest. But the marquis's humanity had brought evil on himself. His visits to the lodge had been remarked, and on this very morning he had been arrested, and conveyed with his daughter, in a carriage escorted by *gendarmes*, to the capital. My detection followed, of course; the papers found on my person proved that I was an agent of England; and the officious M. Gilet had spent the morning in exhibiting to the neighbourhood the order of the "Committee of Public Safety"—a name which froze the blood—to conduct me forthwith to their tribunal.

My prospect was now black enough, for justice was a word unheard of in the present condition of things; and my being an Englishman, and in the civil service of my country, would have been a death-warrant. I must acknowledge, too, that I had fairly thrown away all chance by my adoption of the Prussian sabre. Yet, even in that moment, and let me give myself credit for the recollection, my first inquiry was for the fate of my squadron. The old woman could tell me but little on the subject; but that little was consolatory. The truth is, that nothing is more difficult in war than to catch an hussar who understands his business; and the probability was, that the chief part of them had slipped away, leaving the French to sabre each other in the dark. The fall of my horse alone had brought me down; otherwise I might have escaped and been at that hour caracoling in Berlin.

Monsieur Gilet, with some of the civic authorities, paid me a second visit in the evening, to prepare me for my journey. To me it was become indifferent whether I died in the carriage or by the edge of the guillotine; the journey was short in either case, and the shorter and sooner the better. I answered none of their interrogatories; told them I was at their disposal; directed the old woman to remember me to her master and mistress, if she ever should see them in this world; shook her strong old hand, and bade God bless her. In return, she kissed me on both cheeks, whispered a thousand benedictions; and with the coming of midnight, a *chaise de poste* drew up at the door. As I was a prisoner of importance, M. Gilet was not suffered to take all the honour of my introduction to the axe on himself; and the mayor and deputy-mayor of the district insisted on this opportunity of making themselves known to the heads of the Republic. They mounted on the box in front, a couple of gendarmes sat behind, M. Gilet took his seat by my side, and, with an infinite cracking of whips, we moved out upon the causeway.

I soon discovered that my companion was by no means satisfied with "existing circumstances." The officiousness of the pair of mayors prodigiously displeased him. He broke forth—

"See these two beggars," he exclaimed, "pretending to patriotism! They have no energy, no courage, no civism—Gilet is the man for the service of his country." Merely to stop the torrent of his complainings, I asked him some vague questions relative to the noble whom I was now following to Paris.

"Hah! Citizen Lanfranc. All is over with him. He once held his head high enough, but it will soon be as low as ever it was high."

The position in which the mayor and his deputy sat, on the box of the chaise, continually presenting them to the eye of my companion, kept his choler peculiarly active.

"One of these fellows," he exclaimed, "was the marquis's cook, another his perruquier!—but *I* was his tailor. Every man of talent knows the superiority of *my* profession; for what is the first of nobles without elegance of costume, or what indeed would man himself be without

my art, the noblest and the earliest art of mankind?—and yet he made these two 'brigands' mayor and deputy—*peste!* I did my duty. I denounced him on the spot. I did more. The aristocrat had a faction in the town. It was filled with his dependants. So, to make a clear stage, I denounced the town." He clapped his hands with the exultation of civic triumph.

My recollection of the miseries which his malice had caused, roused me into wrath. He became insolent in turn, until, rash as the act was, I grasped him by the collar, with the full intent of throwing the little writhing wretch out of the window. But while I was dragging him from the seat to which he clung screaming for help, and had already forced him halfway outside, a shot whistled close by the head of the postilion, which brought him to a full stop. "Mort de ma vie!—Brigands!" exclaimed Monsieur Gilet, and, dropping back into the carriage, attempted to make a screen of my body by slipping adroitly behind me. Two or three shots now rattled through the trees, followed by a rush of peasants, who unceremoniously knocked down the two officials in front, and began a general scuffle with the gendarmes. The night was so dark that I could discover nothing of the *mêlée* but by the blaze of their fusils. All, however, was quieted in a few moments by the disappearance of the gendarmes and the complete capture of the convoy—M. Gilet, mayors, and all. Whether we had fallen into the hands of highwaymen, or of stragglers from the French army, was doubtful for a while, as not a syllable was spoken, nor a sound uttered, except by the unhappy functionaries, who grumbled prodigiously as they were dragged along through "rough and smooth, moss and mire," and whose pace was evidently quickened by many a kick and blow of the fusil. This was a rude march for me, too, with my unhealed wound and my week's sojourn in bed; but I was treated, if not with tenderness, without incivility. At length, after about an hour's rapid movement, we reached an open ground, and one of those wide, old, staring, yet not uncomfortable farmhouses, which are to be found in the northern provinces of France.

But it was only a farmhouse after all. The good dame of the house, with an enormous cap, enormous petticoats,

enormous earrings, and all the glaring good humour of a countenance of domestic plenty and power, came to meet us on the threshold; and her reception of me was ardent, to the very verge of strangulation. Nothing could exceed her rapture, or the fierceness of her embraces, except her indignation at the sight of my travelling companions. The peasants who had captured us—bold tall fellows, well dressed and well armed with cutlass and fusil, in the style of the *gardes de chasse*, could scarcely be kept from taking them out to the next tree, to make marks of them; and it was probably by my intercession alone that they were consigned to an outhouse for the night. But the prisoners had no sooner been flung out than I was ushered into an inner room, prepared with somewhat more of attention, where, to my surprise and delight, the Marquis Lanfranc came forward to shake my hand, and, with a thousand expressions of gratitude, made me known to his daughter.

The adventure happened to be of the simplest order. The arrest of the marquis was of course known in an instant, and a party of his foresters had immediately determined to take the law into their own hands, posted themselves on the road by which his carriage was to pass, and released him without difficulty. My release was merely a sequel to the drama. I had been left behind in the hunting-lodge by its owner under the impression that an individual who could not be moved without hazard of his life, would escape the vengeance of village patriotism. But the nurse had no sooner ascertained that I was to be arrested than she sent an express to the farmhouse. The consequence naturally followed in my liberty; and the night which I expected to have spent on my way to the dungeon, presented me with the pleasant exchange of a hospitable shelter, the society of an accomplished man and his handsome daughter, and last, though least, a couple of kisses from my late nurse.

We sat together for some hours, and scarcely felt them pass in the anxious topics which engrossed us—the perils of France, the prospects of the allies, and the captivity of the unhappy Bourbons. Among the rest, the hazards of the De Tourville family were mentioned, and I heard the name of Clotilde with a sensation indescribable. The name was

connected with such displays of fortitude, nobleness of spirit, and deep devotion to the royal cause, that, if I loved before, I now honoured her.

Our conversation was not unfrequently interrupted by bursts of merriment from the outer room, where the peasants sat at a supper provided by the marquis for his bold rescuers, an indulgence which they seemed to enjoy with the highest zest imaginable. At length the marquis and his daughter, who were to be on the wing at daybreak for the German frontier, retired; and wrapping myself up in a cloak, furnished by my landlady and formed to her showy proportions, I threw myself on the sofa, and was in the land of dreams.

But though I slept I did not rest. Every possible species of disappointment, vexation, and difficulty; every conceivable shape of things, past and present, rushed through my brain, and all wild, fierce, disastrous, and melancholy. I was beckoned along dim shades by shapeless phantoms, I was trampled in battle, I was brought before a tribunal, I was on board a ship which blew up, I was flung strangling down an infinite depth in a midnight ocean. At length my horror exceeded the privilege even of dreams. I made one desperate effort to rise, and awoke with a bound on the floor. There I found a real obstacle—a ruffian in a red cap. One strong hand was on my throat, and by the glimmer of the dying lantern which hung from the roof I saw the glitter of a pistol-barrel in the other. "Surrender in the name of the Republic!" were the words which told me my fate. Four or five wearers of the same ominous cap, with sabres and pistols, were round me, and after a brief struggle I was secured. The farmhouse had been surrounded, and the marquis was indebted only to the vigilance of his peasantry for a second escape with his daughter. The *gardes de chasse* had kept the gendarmes at bay until their retreat was secure, and the post-chaise which had brought M. Gilet and his coadjutors was by this time some leagues off, at full speed, beyond the fangs of republicanism.

This at least was comfort, even though I was left behind. But it was clear that the gallant old noble was blameless in the matter, and that nothing was to be blamed but my

habitual ill-luck. "*En route!*" was the last order which I heard, and with a gendarme in a strange kind of post-wagon rolled out from the farmer's stable, I was despatched before daybreak on my startling journey.

I found my gendarme a facetious fellow, though his merriment might not be well adapted to cheer his prisoner. He whistled, he sang, he screamed, he stamped, to get rid of the ennui of travelling with so silent a companion. He told stories of his own prowess, libelled M. Gilet, and abused all mayors, deputy-mayors, and authorities, with the tongue of a leveller. But my facetious friend had his especial *chagrins*.

"I have all my life," said he, "been longing to see Paris, and have never been able to stir a step beyond this stupid province. Yet I have had my chances too. I was once valet to a German count, and we were on the way to Paris together when the post-chaise was stopped, the baron was arrested as a swindler, and I was charged as his accomplice. He was sent to the galleys; I got off. I then had a second chance. I enlisted in a regiment of dragoons which was to be quartered in Versailles. But such was my fate that I had no sooner passed the first drill than we were ordered off to Lorraine to watch old king Stanislaus, the Pole. Still I was determined to see Paris. I asked leave of absence; the adjutant laughed at me, the colonel turned on his heel, and the provost-marshal gave me a week of the black-hole. But a week is but seven days after all, and on my seeing the parade again, I—"

"You deserted?"

"Not quite that," was the reply. "I took leave—and as I had seen enough of the black-hole already I took good care to give the provost-marshal no notice on the subject. A fortnight's march brought me within sight of the towers of Notre Dame. But as I was resting myself on the road-side, our adjutant, as ill-luck would have it, came by in the *coupe* of the diligence. He jumped out. I was seized, given up to the next guard-house, and after fitting me with a pair of fetters, by way of boots, I was ordered to take my passage with a condemned regiment for the West Indies. There I served ten years; I saw the regiment reduced to a skeleton by short rations and new rum, and returned the

tenth representative of fifteen hundred felons. At last I have a chance; the *gendarme* of the village was so desperately mauled by the foresters in the attempt to carry you prisoner that he has been forced to take to his bed and let me take his place. The thing is certain now. *You* will be guillotined, but *I* shall see Paris."

We had toiled through our long journey, rendered doubly long by the dreariest and deepest roads on earth, and were winding round the spur of Montmartre, when a troop of citizen heroes, coming forth to sweep the country of the retreating Prussians, and whose courage had risen to the boiling point by the news of the retreat, surrounded the carriage. My Prussian uniform was evidence for the brains of the patriots, and the quick discovery of Parisian ears that I had not learned my French in their capital settled the question, of my being a traitor. The *gendarme* joined in the charge with his natural volubility, but rather rashly insisted on his right to take his prisoner into Paris on his own behalf. I saw a cloud gathering on the brow of the *chef*—a short, corpulent, grim-looking fellow, with the true Faubourg St. Antoine physiognomy. The dispute grew hot; my escort was foolish enough to clap his hand on the hilt of his sabre—an affront intolerable to a citizen at the head of fifty or sixty *braves* from the counter or the shambles; the result was a succession of blows from the whole troop, which finished in my seeing him stripped of everything and flung into the *cachot* of the *corps de garde*, from which his only view of his beloved Paris must have been through iron bars.

My captor, determined to enter the capital for once with *éclat*, now seated himself beside me, and surrounded by his pike-bearers, we began our march down the hill.

My new friend was communicative, and he gave me his history in a breath. He had been a clerk in one of the small tribunals of the south; inflamed with patriotism, and indignant at the idea of selling his talents at the rate of ten sous a day "in a rat-hole called a bureau," he had resolved on being known to the world, and to Paris he came. "Paris was the true place for talent." He was a *grand homme* already. Danton had told him so within the last fortnight, and France and Europe would no sooner read

his last *chanson* on the 'Crimes of Kings' than his fame would be fixed with posterity."

He then gave me his political creed. "We have cut down the throne," said he, clapping his hands with exultation, "and now you may buy it for firewood. But you are an aristocrat, and of course a slave, while we have got liberty, equality, and a triumvirate that shears off the heads of traitors at a sign. Suspicion of being suspected is quite sufficient. Of course you have heard of the clearance of the prisons. A magnificent work. Five thousand aristocrats, rich, noble, and enemies to their country, sent headless to the shades of tyrants! *Vive la République!* But a grand idea strikes me. You shall see Danton himself, the genius of liberty, the hero of human nature, the terror of kings." The thought was new, and a new thought is enough to turn the brain of the Gaul at any time. He thrust his head out of the window, ordered a general halt, and, instead of taking me to the quarters of the National Guard, resolved to have the merit of delivering up an "agent of Pitt and his English guineas" to the master of the Republic.

After threading a labyrinth of streets so dreary and so dilapidated as almost to give me the idea that I had never been in Paris before, we drove up to the grim entrance of the Abbaye. My companion there left me in charge of the sentinel, and darted in. "And is this," thought I as I looked round the narrow space of the four walls, "the spot where so many hundreds were butchered—this the scene of the very triumph of massacre—this miserable court the last field of so many gallant lives—these stones the last resting-place of so many whose tread had been on cloth of gold—these old and crumbling walls giving the last echo to the voices of statesmen and nobles, the splendid courtiers, the brilliant orators, and the hoary ecclesiastics of the most superb kingdom of Europe?"

But my reveries were broken up by the return of the little captain, more angry than ever. He had missed the opportunity of seeing the "great man," who had gone to the Salpétrière. And some of the small men, who performed as his jackals, having discovered that the captain was looking for a share in their plunder, had thought pro-

per to treat him, his commission, and even his civism, with extreme contempt.

"*A la Salpêtrière!*" There again disappointment met us. The great man had been there "but a few minutes before," and we dragged on our slow way through mire and ruts that would have been formidable to an artillery wagon with all its team.

"*Aux Carmes!*" was now the direction, for my conductor's resolve to earn his reward before daybreak was rendered more pungent by his interview with the *gens de bureau* at the Abbaye.

"You may think yourself fortunate," he exclaimed, "in having been in my charge! That brute of a country gendarme could have shown you nothing. Now *I* know every gaol in Paris. I have studied them. They form the true knowledge of a citizen."

I saw a low range of blank wall, beyond which rose an ancient tower.

"Here," said he, "liberty had a splendid triumph. A hundred and fifty tonsured apostles of incivism here fell in one day beneath the two-handed sword of freedom. *Chantons la Carmagnole.*"

But he was destined to be disappointed once more. "Danton had been there, but was suddenly called away by a messenger from the Jacobins." Our direction was changed again. "Now," said he, "we shall be disappointed no longer. Once engaged in debate he will be fixed for the night. *Allons!* You shall see the 'grand patriot,' 'the regenerator,' 'the first man in the world.' *Aux Jacobins!*"

But we still rolled on. At length, in one of the streets which seemed darker and more miserable than all the rest, we were brought to a full stop by the march of a strong body of the National Guard which halted in front of an enormous old building, frowning with battlement and bartizan. "*Le Temple,*" exclaimed my companion, with almost a shriek of exultation.

I glanced upwards and saw a light, of that pale glimmer which in my boyish days I had always attributed to spectres, passing along the dim casements of a gallery. I cannot express how deeply that image sank upon me. I saw

there only a huge tomb—the tomb of living royalty—of the last of a line of monarchs honoured by all the feelings that still bound the heart of man to France. All was spectral. My heart withered within me as I looked on the towers of the Temple. It almost withers within me at this moment when I think of them. They are levelled long since, but while I write I see them before me again a sepulchre; I see the mustering of that crowd of more than savages, which kept guard before their gate; I see the pale glimmer of that lamp which was then, perhaps, lighting the steps of Marie Antoinette to her solitary cell.

Of all the sights of that melancholy wandering, this sight the most disheartened me. Whatever had been my carelessness of life before, it was now almost scorn. What was I, when such victims were prepared for sacrifice?

Some of this depression may have been the physical result of fatigue, for I had been now four-and-twenty hours without rest; and the dismal streets, the dashing rain, and the utter absence of human movement, as we dragged our dreary way along, would have made even the floor of a dungeon welcome.

At length, our postilion, after nearly relieving us of all the troubles of this world by running on the verge of the moat which once surrounded the Bastille, and where nothing but the screams of my companion prevented him from plunging in, wholly lost his way. The few lamps in this intricate and miserable quarter had been blown out by the tempest, and our only resource appeared to be patience until the tardy break of a winter's morn. However, this my companion's patriotism would not suffer. "The Club would be adjourned! Danton would be gone!" He should not hear the Jacobin lion roar, nor have the reward on which he reckoned for flinging me into his jaws. Utterly indifferent as to where I was to be deposited, I saw and heard nothing until I was roused by my companion's cry of "La Place de Grève."

A large fire was burning in the midst of its gloomy square, round which a party of the National Guard were standing, with their muskets piled, and wrapped in their cloaks against the inclemency of the night. Further off,

and in the centre, feebly seen by the low blaze, was a wooden structure, on whose corners torches were flaring in the wind. "*Voilà la guillotine!*" exclaimed my captor, with the sort of ecstasy which might issue from the lips of a worshipper. As I raised my eyes, an accidental flash of the fire showed the whole outline of the horrid machine. I saw the glitter of the very axe that was to drop upon my head. My imagination saw even new ghastliness in the shape of its huge scythe-like steel; it seemed made for massacre. All my apathy was now gone. The thought darted through my mind like a jet of fire; but it gave me the strength of fire. I determined to die by the bayonets of the guard, or by any other death than this. My captor perceived my agitation, and my eye glanced on his withered and malignant visage, as with a smile he was cocking his pistol. I sprang on him like a tiger. In our struggle the pistol went off, and a gush of blood from his cheek showed that it had inflicted a severe wound. I was now his master, and, grasping him by the throat with one hand, with the other I threw open the door and leaped upon the pavement. The report of the pistol caught the ears of the guard, whom I saw hurrying to unpile their muskets. But this was a work of confusion, and, before they could snatch up their arms, I had made my choice of the darkest and narrowest of the wretched lanes which issue into the square.

I twined my course through numberless streets, most of which have been since swept away; but, on turning into the Boulevard, and when I had some hope of taking refuge in my old hotel, I found that I had plunged into a crowd of persons hurrying along, apparently on some business which strongly excited them. Some carried lanterns, some pikes, and there was a general appearance of more than republican enthusiasm, even of savage ferocity, among them, that gave sufficient evidence of my having fallen into hazardous society. I attempted to draw back, but this would not be permitted; the words, "Spy, traitor, slave of the Monarchiques!" were heaped upon me. It may naturally be supposed that I made all kinds of protestations to escape being piked or pistoled. But they had no time to wait for apologies. The cry of "Death to the

traitor!" was followed by the brandishing of a whole circle of knives round me. At that moment, when I must have fallen helplessly, a figure stepped forward, and, opening the slide of his dark lantern directly on his own face, whispered the word "Mordecai." I recognized, I shall not say with what feelings, the police agent who had formerly conveyed me out of the city. He was dressed, like the majority of the crowd, in the republican costume; and certainly there never was a more extraordinary figure. He wore the red cap of the butchers of the faubourgs; an enormous beard covered his breast, a short Spanish mantle hung from his shoulders, a short leathern doublet, with a belt like an armoury, stuck with knives and pistols, a sabre, and huge trousers striped with red—the new fashion, to imitate streams of gore—completed the patriot uniform. Others wore broad bands of linen round their waists, inscribed "2nd, 3rd, and 4th September,"—the days of massacre! These were its heroes. I was in the midst of the *élite* of murder.

"Citizens," exclaimed the Jew in a voice of thunder, driving back the foremost, "hold your hands; are you about to destroy a friend of freedom? Your knives have drunk the blood of aristocrats; but they are the defence of liberty. This citizen is one of ourselves. He has returned from the frontier, to join the brave men of Paris in their march to the downfall of tyrants. But forward! Our friends await us in the glorious club of the Jacobins This is the hour of victory. Advance, regenerated sons of freedom! Forward, Frenchmen!"

His speech had the full effect. The rapid executors of public vengeance fell back; and the Jew whispering to me, "You must follow us, or be killed," I chose the easier alternative at once, and stepped forward like a good citizen. As my protector pushed the crowd before him, in which he seemed to be a leader, he said to me from time to time, "Make no resistance. A word would be the signal for your death—we are going to the hall of the Jacobins. This is a great night among them, and the chiefs of the party will either be ruined to-night, or be masters of everything by morning." I remained silent, as I was ordered; and we hurried on, until there was a halt in front of an

ancient building. "The hall of the Jacobins," whispered the Jew.

We plunged into the dark passages of a vast pile evidently once a convent, and where the chill of the massive walls struck to the marrow. I felt as if walking through a charnel-house. A twinkling light, towards the end of an immense and lofty aisle, was our guide; and the crowd, long familiar with the way, poured on through the intricacies where so many penitential feet had trod before them. At length a spiral stair brought us to a large gallery, where our entrance was marked with a shout of congratulation; and stumbling over the benches and each other, we at length took our seats in the loftiest part, which, in both the club and the National Assembly, was called, from its height, the Mountain, and, from the character of its possessors, was a mountain of flame.

In the area below, once the nave of the church, sat the Jacobin club. I now for the first time saw that memorable and terrible assemblage. Nothing could be more suited than its aspect to its deeds. The hall was of such extent that a large portion of it was scarcely visible, and the few lights which hung from the walls but dimly displayed even the remainder. All was sepulchral. Even the chair of the president stood on a tomb, an antique structure of black marble. The elevated stand, from which the speakers generally addressed the assembly, had the strongest resemblance to a scaffold; and behind it, covering the wall, were suspended chains, and instruments of torture of every horrid kind, used in the dungeons of old times, and, though placed there for the sake of contrast with the mercies of the age of philosophy, yet enhancing the general idea of a scene of death.

It required no addition to its gloom to render the hall of the Jacobins fearful; but the meetings were always held at night, and often prolonged through the whole night. The deliberation of this especial night was to settle the question whether the monarch or the Jacobin club was to ascend the scaffold. It was the debate on the execution of the unhappy Louis XVI.

The arrival of the crowd among whom I had taken my unwilling seat, evidently gave new spirits to the regicides; the moment was critical. Even in Jacobinism all were not

equally black, and fear of the national revulsion at so desperate a deed startled many. The leaders had held a secret consultation while the debate was drawing on its slow length; and Danton's old expedient, "terror," had been resolved on. His emissaries were suddenly sent round Paris to summon all his banditti; and the low *cafés*, the faubourg taverns, and every haunt of the very drunkenness of crime, had poured forth. The remnant of the Marseillais —actual galley-slaves, who had led the late massacres,—the paid assassins of the Marais, and the *sabreurs* of the Royal Guard, who, after their treason to their king, had found a profitable trade in living on the robbery of the nobles and priests, formed this reinforcement; and their entrance into the gallery was recognized by a clapping of hands from below, which they answered by a triumphant roar, accompanied with the clashing of their knives and sabres.

The forms of the Convention were strictly imitated; and even those Jacobins who usually led the debate, scrupulously wore the dress of the better orders. Robespierre was elaborately dressed whenever he appeared in the tribune; and even Danton abandoned the *canaille* costume for the time. I was struck with his showy stature, his bold forehead, and his commanding attitude, as he stood waving his hand over the multitude below, as if he waved a sceptre. His appearance was received with a general shout from the gallery, which he returned by one profound bow, and then stood erect till all sounds had sunk. His powerful voice then rang through the extent of the hall. He began by congratulating the people on their having relieved the Republic from its external dangers. His language at first was moderate, and his recapitulation of the perils which must have befallen a conquered country was sufficiently true, and even touching; but his tone soon changed, and I saw the true democrat. "What," he cried, "are those perils to the horrors of domestic perfidy? What are the ravages on the frontier to poison and the dagger at our firesides? What is a gallant death in the field to assassination in cold blood? Listen, fellow-citizens, there is *at this hour* a plot laid for your destruction, deeper than ever existed in the shallow heads, or could ever be executed by the coward hearts, of a foreign soldiery. Where is that plot? In the

streets? No. Is it in the Tuileries? No. Where then is the focus of the plot—where the gathering of the storm that is to shake down the battlements of the Republic—where that terrible deposit of combustibles which the noble has gathered, the priest has piled, and the king has stood ready to kindle? Brave citizens, that spot is——," he paused, looking mysteriously round, while a silence deep as death pervaded the multitude; then, as if suddenly recovering himself, he thundered out—"the Temple!"

No language can describe the shout, or the scene, that followed. The daring word was now spoken which all had anticipated, but which Danton alone had the desperate audacity to utter. The mob in the gallery screamed, howled, roared, embraced each other; then, rising and taking hands, danced, flourished their weapons, and sang the Marseillaise and the Carmagnole. The club below were scarcely less violent in their demonstrations of furious joy. Danton had now accomplished his task; but his vanity thirsted for additional applause, and he entered into a catalogue of his services to republicanism. In the midst of the detail, a low but singularly penetrating voice was heard from the extremity of the hall.

"Descend, man of massacre!"

I saw Danton start back as if he had been shot. At length, recovering his breath, he said feebly—

"Citizens, of what am I accused?"

"Of the three days of September," uttered the voice again, in a tone so deeply sepulchral that it palpably awed the whole assemblage.

"Who is it that insults me? Who dares to malign me?" feebly cried Danton. There was no answer; and encouraged by the silence he now exclaimed, "What spy of the Girondists, what traitor of the Bourbons, what hireling of the gold of Pitt, is among us?" His visage, even at the distance I could observe, had turned clay-colour. "Who accuses me?"

"I!" replied the voice, and I saw a thin tall figure stalk up the length of the hall, and stand at the foot of the tribune. "Descend!" was the only word which he spoke; and Danton, as if under a spell, to my astonishment obeyed without a word, and came down. The stranger instantly sprang into his place—none knew his name; and the rapidity and

boldness of his assault suspended all in wonder like my own. I can give but a most incomplete conception of the extraordinary eloquence of this mysterious intruder. He charged Danton with having constructed the whole conspiracy against the unfortunate prisoners of September; with having deceived the people by imaginary alarms of the approach of the enemy; with having plundered the national treasury to pay the assassins; and, last and most deadly charge of all, with having formed a plan for a national dictatorship, of which he himself was to be the first possessor. The charge was sufficiently probable, and was not now heard for the first time. But the intense keenness and fierce promptitude with which the speaker poured the charge upon him, gave it a new aspect; and I could see, in the changing physiognomies round me, that the great democrat was already in danger. He obviously felt his peril himself; for, starting up from the bench to which he had returned, he cried out, or rather yelled—

"Citizens, this man thirsts for my blood. Am I to be sacrificed? Am I to be exposed to the daggers of assassins?" But no answering shout now arose; a dead silence reigned: all eyes were still turned to the tribune. I saw Danton, after a gaze of total helplessness on all sides, throw up his hands like a drowning man, and stagger back to his seat. But nothing could be more unfortunate than his interruption; for the speaker now poured the renewed invective, like a stream of molten iron, full on his personal character and career.

"Born a beggar, Danton, your only hope of bread was crime. Adopting the profession of an advocate, your only conception of law was chicanery. Coming to Paris, you took up patriotism as a trade, and turned the trade into an imposture. Trained to dependence, you always hung on some master till he spurned you. Always a menial till you could be a tyrant. Always a swindler till you could be a public plunderer. Always a dastard until you could be a man of massacre. Always a slave until you could be a regicide!"

Danton had enemies even among Republicans, and as I glanced at Robespierre, who was listening, with bent brow and the deepest attention, to the language of this fiery

speaker, I saw a flash of malignant joy pass across his sallow visage; even sounds of approval began to murmur through the hall. As I again looked towards Danton, I never observed so total a change in any human being. He writhed like one stretched upon the rack. His broad bold face seemed actually to have been withered by years; if he had drunk poison it could not have been more ghastly. He strove several times to rise; but his limbs failed, and he sank back again. The speaker, after a pause, like that of the executioner marking a victim bound on the wheel, proceeded to crush him blow by blow. "You licked the dust before Mirabeau; you attempted to betray him, and he trampled on you; you took refuge in the cavern of Marat, until he found you too base even for his base companionship, and he too spurned you; you then clung to the skirts of Robespierre. Viper! known only by your coils and your poison, like the original serpent, degraded even from the brute into the reptile, you already feel your sentence. I pronounce it before all. The man to whom you now cling will crush you. Maximilien Robespierre, is not your heel already lifted up to tread out the life of this traitor? Maximilien Robespierre," he repeated with a still more piercing tone, "do I not speak the truth? Have I not stripped the veil from your thoughts? Am I not looking on your heart?"

He then addressed each of the Jacobin leaders, in a brief appeal. "Billaud de Varennes, stand forth—do you not long to strike your dagger into the bosom of this new tyrant? Collot d'Herbois, are you not sworn to destroy him? Couthon, have you not pronounced him perjured, perfidious, and unfit to live? St. Just, have you not in your bosom the list of those who have pledged themselves that Danton shall never be dictator; that his grave shall be dug before he shall tread on the first step of the throne; that his ashes shall sooner be scattered to the four winds of heaven; that he shall never gorge on France?"

A hollow murmur, like an echo of the vaults beneath, repeated the concluding words. The murmur had scarcely subsided when this extraordinary apparition, flinging round him a long white cloak which he had hitherto carried on his arm, and which in the dim light gave him the look of one covered with a shroud, cried out, in a voice of still

deeper solemnity, "George Jaques Danton, you have this night pronounced the death of your king; I now pronounce your own. By the victims of the 20th of June—by the victims of the 10th of August—by the victims of the 2nd of September—by the thousands whom your thirst of blood has slain—by the tens of thousands whom your treachery has sent to perish in a foreign grave—by the millions whom the war which you have kindled will lay in the field of slaughter—I cite you to appear before a tribunal where sits a Judge whom none can elude, and none can defy. Within a year and a month, I cite you to meet the spirits of your victims before the throne of the Eternal."

He stopped—not a voice was heard. He descended the steps of the tribune; and stalked slowly through the hall—not a hand was raised against him. He pursued his way with as much calmness and security as if he had been a supernatural visitant, until he plunged into the darkness, as if he had dissolved in air.

This denunciation threw a complete damp on the regicidal ardour; no one ventured to mount the tribune.

I had often looked towards the gallery door, during the night, for the means of escape; but my police friend had forbidden my moving before his return. I therefore remained until the club were breaking up, and the gallery began to clear. Cautious as I had been, I could not help exhibiting, from time to time, some indignation at the atrocities of the night, and especially at the sentence of the helpless king. In all this I had found a sympathizing neighbour, who had exhibited marked civility in explaining the peculiarities of the place, and giving me brief sketches of the speakers as they rose in succession. He had especially agreed with me in deprecating the cruelty of the regicidal sentence. I now rose to bid my gentlemanlike *cicerone* good night, when, to my surprise, I saw him make a sign to two loiterers near the door, who instantly pinioned me.

"We cannot part quite so soon, Monsieur l'Aristocrat," said he; "and though I much regret that I cannot have the honour of accommodating you in the Temple, near your friend Monsieur Louis Capet, yet you may rely on my services in procuring a lodging in one of the most agreeable prisons in Paris."

I had been entrapped in the most established style, and I had nothing to thank for it but fortune. Resistance was in vain, for they pointed to the pistols inside their coats; and with a vexed heart, and making many an angry remark on the treachery of the villain who had ensnared me—matters which fell on his ear probably with about the same effect as the rain on the pavement at my feet—I was put into a close carriage, and, with my captors, carried off to the well-known and hideous prison, the St. Lazare.

CHAPTER XXI.

On reaching the prison, I gave up all for lost; sullenly resigned myself to what now seemed the will of fate; and without a word, except in answer to the interrogatory of my name and country, followed the two horrid-looking ruffians who performed the office of turnkeys. The St. Lazare had been a monastery, and its massiveness, gloom, and confusion of buildings, with its extreme silence at that late hour, gave me the strongest impression of a huge catacomb above ground. The door of a cell was opened for me, after traversing a long succession of cloisters; and on a little wooden trestle, and wrapped in my cloak, I attempted to sleep. But if sleep has not much to boast of in Paris at any time, what was it then? I had scarcely closed my eyes when I was roused by a rapid succession of musket-shots, fired at the opposite side of the cloister, the light of torches flashing through all the avenues, and the shouts of men and women in wrath, terror, and agony.

I flung myself off my uneasy bed, and, climbing up by my prison bars, endeavoured to ascertain the cause of the *mêlée*. But the imperfect light served to show little more than a general mustering of the National Guard in the court, and a huge and heavy building, into which they were discharging random shots whenever a head appeared at its casements. A loud huzza followed whenever one of the shots appeared to take effect, and a laugh equally loud ran through the ranks when the bullet wasted itself on the massive mullions or stained glass of the windows. A tall figure on horse-

back, whom I afterwards learned to be Henriot, the commandant of the National Guard, galloped up and down the court, with the air of a general-in-chief manœuvring an army. He had actually provided himself with a truncheon, to meet all the emergencies of supreme command.

But fortune is a jade after all; and the hero of the tricoloured scarf was destined to have his laurels a little shorn, even on this narrow field. While his charger was rattling over the cloisters, and his veterans from the cellars and counters of Paris were popping off their muskets at the unfortunates who started up against the old casement, I heard a sudden rush and run; a low postern of the cloister had been flung back, and the prisoners within the building had made a sally on their tormentors. Their rush was perfectly successful; it had the effect of a complete surprise; and though their only weapons were fragments of their firewood—for all fire-arms and knives had been taken from them immediately on their entrance into the prison—they routed the heroes of the guard at the first charge. Even the gallant commander himself only shared the fate of his *camarades;* and I had the gratification of seeing the braggadocio go down from his saddle in the midst of a group who certainly had no veneration for the majesty of the truncheon.

The victory was achieved; but, like many other victories, it produced no results: the gates of the St. Lazare were too strongly guarded to be forced by an unarmed crowd; and I saw the prisoners successively and gloomily return to the only roof, melancholy as that was, which could now shelter them.

The morning brought my case before the authorities of this den. Half a dozen coarse and filthy men in uniform, some of them evidently sufferers in the tumult of the night, for their heads were bandaged—a matter which gave good reason to expect increased brutishness in their tempers—formed the tribunal. I had heard enough of popular justice to believe that I had now arrived within sight of the last struggle; and I resolved to give these ruffians no triumph over the Englishman.

"Citizen, who are you?" was the first interrogatory, in a fierce tone.

"I am no citizen, no Frenchman, and no republican," was my answer. My judges stared at each other.

"You are a prisoner. How came you here?"

"You are judges. How came you there?"

"You are charged with crimes against the Republic."

"In my country no man is expected to criminate himself."

"But you are a traitor: can you deny that?"

"I am no traitor to *my* king; can you say as much for yourselves?" They now began to cast furious glances at me.

"You are insolent; what brought you into the territory of France?"

"The same thing which placed you on that bench—force."

"Are you mad?"

"No—are you?"

"Do you not know that we can send you to the guillotine?"

"If you do, I shall only go before *you*."

This put an end to my interrogatory at once. I had accidentally touched upon the nerve which quivered in every bosom of these felons.

They now felt themselves at once menaced and insulted. An immediate order for my confinement as a "*brigand Anglais*" was made out by the indignant "commission," and I was transferred from my lonely cell into the huge crowded building in the opposite cloister, which had been the scene of the attack on the previous night. But this change, intended for my infinite degradation until the guillotine should have despatched its business in arrear, I found much to my advantage.

The prisoners with whom I was now to take my chance were of all ranks, all professions, and all degrees of crime: wealth, however, in the eyes of the democracy, being the unpardonable crime. But some of the prisoners were from La Vendée, peasants mixed with nobles, who, though no formal shape of resistance to the Republic was yet declared, had exhibited already that gallant contempt of the new tyranny which afterwards immortalized the name. It was this sturdy portion which had made the dash on the night of the riot; and their daring had the effect, at least, of saving their fellow-prisoners in future from being made

marks to teach the National Guard the art of shooting. We were left almost wholly to ourselves. Yet, if a philosopher desired to take a lesson in human nature, this was the spot of earth for the study. We had it in every shape and shade. In all but the name, we were better republicans than the tribe who shouted in the streets or robbed in the tribunals.

I made this remark one day to the Marquis de Cassini, a philosopher, and pupil of the great Buffon. "The reason is," said he, "that the minds of men differ chiefly by their circumstances, as the bodies of men differ chiefly by their clothes. Throw off their dress, whether embroidery or rags, and you will find the same number of ribs in them all."

"But my chief surprise," said I, "is to find in this prison more mutual kindness, and, in every sense, more generosity of sentiment, than one generally expects to meet with in the world."

"The truth," replied Cassini, "is, that self-interest is the mere creature of society, and is the most active in the basest society. But here," and he cast his eyes round the mingled crowd, "as there is not the slightest possibility that any one of us shall escape, we have the better opportunity of showing our original *bienséance*. All the selfishness on earth will not save us from the guillotine, and therefore we are the more ready to accommodate each other for the rest of our journey."

I agreed with him on the philosophy of the case, and in return he introduced me to some of the Vendéan nobles, who had hitherto exhibited their general scorn of Parisian contact by confining themselves to the circle of their followers. I was received with the distinction due to my introducer, and invited to join their supper that night. The prison had once been the chapel of the convent. The roofs of the aisles could not be reached except by flame, and the monuments of the ancient priors and prelates, when they had once been stripped of their bronzes, were too solid for the passing fury of the mob. The scene was curious, but by no means uncheerful. The national spirit is inextinguishable; and, however my countrymen may bear up against the extremes of ill-fortune, no man meets its beginnings with so easy an air as the man of France

Our supper was laid out in one of the side chapels; and, coarse and scanty as it was, I seldom recollect an evening which I passed with a lighter sense of the burden of a prisoner's time. I found the Vendéan nobles a manlier race than their more courtly countrymen; still it was not difficult to see that those straightforward and honest lords of the soil, who were yet to prove themselves the true chevaliers of France, could feel as acutely the injuries inflicted by the absurdities and vices of the successive administrations as if they had figured in the clubs of the capital.

We had our *chansons* too, and some of them were as contemptuous as ever came from the pen of Parisian satire.

When I returned to the place where my mattress was flung, the crowd had already sunk to rest, and there was a general silence throughout the building. The few lights which our gaolers supplied to us had become fewer; and, but for the tread of the doubled sentries outside, I might have imagined myself in a vast cemetery. The agitation of the day had thrown me into such a state of mental and bodily fatigue, that I had scarcely laid my side on my bed before I dropped into a heavy slumber. The ingenuity of our tormentors, however, prohibited our knowing anything in the shape of indulgence; and in realization of the dramatist's renowned *mot*, "traitors never sleep," the prison-door was suddenly flung open at midnight—a drum rattled through the aisle—the whole body of the prisoners were ordered to stand forth and answer to their names, the ceremony concluding with the march of the night-guard into the chapel, and their being ordered to load with ball-cartridge, to give us sufficient knowledge of the result of any attempt in future. This refinement in cruelty we owed to the *escapade* of the night before.

At length, after a variety of insulting queries, even this scene was over. But a French night, in those times, was like none else, and I had yet to witness a scene such as I believe could not have existed in any other country of the globe.

After some period of feverish sleep, I was awakened by a strange murmur, which, mixing with my dreams, had given me the comfortless idea of hearing the roar of the

multitude at some of the horrid displays of the guillotine; and as I half opened my unwilling eyes, still dim with sleep, I saw a long procession of figures, in flowing mantles and draperies, moving down the huge hall. A semicircle of beds filled the extremity of the chapel, which had been vacated by a draft of unfortunate beings carried off during the day to the guillotine. While my eyes, with a strange and almost superstitious anxiety—such is the influence of time and place—followed this extraordinary train, I saw it take possession of the range of beds, each new possessor sitting wrapped in his pale vesture and perfectly motionless. I can scarcely describe the sensations with which I continued to gaze on the spectacle. My eyes sometimes closed, and I almost conceived that the whole was a dream; but the forms were too distinct for this conjecture, and the question with me now became—"Are they flesh and blood?" I had not sunk so far into reverie as to imagine that they were the actual spectres of the unhappy tenants of those beds on the night before, all of whom were now, doubtless, in the grave; but the silence, the distance, and the dimness perplexed me, and I left the question to be settled by the event. At a gesture from the central figure they all rose, and a man loaded with fetters was brought forward in front of the circle.

I now found that a trial was going on: the group were the judges, the man was the criminal; there was an accuser, there was an advocate, all the general process of a trial was passing before my view. But all that I could discover was, that the accused was charged with *incivisme*, and that, defying the court and disdaining the charge, he was pronounced guilty—the whole circle standing up as the sentence was pronounced, and, with a solemn waving of their arms and murmur of their voices, assenting to the act of the judge. The victim was then seized upon, swept away into the darkness, and after a brief pause I heard a shriek and a crash;—the sentence had been fulfilled, all was over. The court now covered their heads with their mantles, as if in sorrow for this formidable necessity.

Daylight brought back my senses; and I was convinced that the pantomimic spirit of the people, however unaccountably it might disregard proprieties, had been busy

with the scene. On mentioning it to Cassini, he let me into the solution at once.

"Have you never observed," said he, "the passion of all people for walking on the edge of a precipice, climbing a church-tower, looking down from a battlement, or doing any one thing which gives them the nearest possible chance of breaking their necks? Then you can comprehend the performance of last night. The prisoners were practising a trial."

I gave an involuntary look of surprise at this species of indulgence, and remarked something on its violation of common feeling, to say nothing of the almost profaneness which it involved.

"As to the feeling," said Cassini, with that shrug which no shoulders but those of a Frenchman can ever give, "it is a matter of taste; and perhaps we have no right to dictate in such matters to persons who would think a week a long lease of life, and who, instead of seven days, may not have so many hours. The display last night was simply the trial of a royalist; and as we are all more or less angry with republicanism at this moment, and with some small reason too, the royalist, though he was condemned, as everybody now is, was suffered to have his apotheosis. We enjoy it with the greatest gusto, and revenge ourselves for the tribulations of the day by trying our tormentors at night."

"I am satisfied with the reason, although I am not yet quite reconciled to the performance. But who were the actors?"

"You are now nearer the truth than you suspected. We have men of every trade here, and among the rest we have *actors* enough to stock the *Comédie Française*. If you remain a little longer among us, you will see some of the best farces of the best time played uncommonly well by our fellow-*détenus*. But, if you wish to see the exhibition, I am concerned to tell you that you must wait, for to-night all our *artistes* are busy. In what do you conceive?"

I professed my inability to fathom "the infinite resources of the native mind, where amusement was the question."

"Well, then—not to keep you in suspense—we are to have a masquerade."

The fact was even so.

It was still early in the day, when some bustle in the porch of the prison turned all eyes towards it, and a new detachment of prisoners was brought in. I shall say nothing of the scenes of wretchedness which followed. The commissary of the district came in, with a list of the prisoners summoned before the tribunal. Our prison population was thus like the waters of a bath—as one stream flowed in another flowed out; but the level was constantly sustained. With an instinctive pang, I heard my name called. Cassini approached me with a smile, which he evidently put on to conceal his emotion.

"This is quick work, M. Marston," said he, taking my hand. "But, as the ruffian in the school fable says, 'Hodie tibi, cras mihi,' twelve hours will probably make all the difference between us."

I took off the little locket containing my last remembrance of Clotilde, and put it into his hands, requesting him, if he survived, to transmit it to her with an assurance that I remembered her in an hour when all else was forgotten.

"I shall perform the part of your legatee," said he, "till to-morrow; then I must probably look for some other depositary;—here you know that heirship is rapid, and that the will is to be executed before the ink is dry." He turned away to hide his emotion. "I have not known you long, sir," said he; "but in this place we must be expeditious in everything. You are too young to die. If you are sacrificed, I am convinced that you will die like a gentleman and a man of honour. And yet I have some hope, some presentiment, nay almost a consciousness, that you will not be cut off—at least until you are as weary of the world as I am. At all events, my young friend, if you escape from this pandemonium of France, take this paper, and vindicate the memory of Cassini."

He gave me a memoir, which I could not help receiving with a smile, from the brevity of the period during which the trust was likely to hold. The gendarme now came up to demand my attendance. I shook hands with the marquis, who at that moment was certainly no philosopher, and followed the train.

We were about fifty in number; and after being placed in open artillery wagons, the procession moved rapidly through the suburb, until we reached one of those dilapidated and hideous-looking buildings which were still to be found startling the stranger's eye with the recollections of the St. Bartholomew and the Fronde.

A crowd assembled round the door of one of these melancholy abodes, and the bayonets of a company of the National Guard glittering above their heads, indicated the place of our destination. The crowd shouted at the "aristocrats thirsting for the blood of the good citizens." The guard opened, and we were rapidly passed through several halls, the very dwelling of decay, until we reached a large court, where the prisoners remained while the judges were occupied in deciding on the fate of the train which the morning had already provided. I say nothing of the insults which were intended, if not to add new bitterness to death, to indulge the wretched men and women attending on the tribunal with opportunities of triumphing over those born to better things. While we remained in the court, shouts too were heard at intervals which, as the turnkeys informed us, arose from the spectators of the executions,—death, in these fearful days, immediately following sentence. Yet, to the last, the ludicrous often mingled with the melancholy. While I was taking my place in the file, according to the order of our summons, and was next in rotation for trial, a smart and over-dressed young man stepped out of his place in the rank, and, drawing from his bosom a large roll of manuscript, presented it to me, with the special entreaty that, "in case I survived, I should take care of its propagation throughout Europe." My answer naturally was, that my fate was fully as precarious as that of the rest, and that thus I had no conceivable hope of being able to give his pamphlet to mankind.

"*Mais*, monsieur,"—that phrase which means so many inexpressible things—"you must observe that by putting my pamphlet into your charge it has a double chance. You may read it as a part of your defence."

All further deprecation on my part was now cut short by the appearance of the guard, by whom I was marched into the presence of the tribunal. The day had waned, and

two or three lamps exhibited to my weary eye the judges whose decision was to make the difference between life and death within the next half-hour. Their appearance was the reverse of one likely to reconcile the unfortunate to the severity of the law. They were seven or eight ruffians, sitting on a raised platform, with a long table in their front covered with papers and with what seemed to be property taken from the condemned—watches, purses, and trinkets; and among those piles fragments of a dinner—plates and soups, with several bottles of cognac and wine.

The judges of those sectional tribunals were generally miscreants of the lowest description, who had driven away the magistracy, and, under the pretext of administering justice, were actually driving a trade in robbery of every kind. A short coat without sleeves, the shirt-sleeves tucked up as for instant execution, the neck open, no collar, fierce moustaches, a head of clotted hair, sometimes a red night-cap stuck on one side, and sometimes a red handkerchief tied round it as a temporary *bonnet de nuit*—for the judges frequently, in drunkenness or fatigue, threw themselves on the bench or the floor and slept—exhibited the regenerated aspect of Themis in the capital of the polished world.

My name was now called. I shall not say with what a throb of heart I heard it. But, at the moment when I was stepping forward, I felt my skirt pulled by one of the guard behind me. I looked, and recognized through all his beard, and the hair that in profusion covered his physiognomy, my police friend, who seemed to possess the faculty of being everywhere—a matter, however, rendered easier to him by his being in the employ of the government—and who simply whispered the words, "Be firm, and acknowledge nothing." Slight as the hint was, it had come in good time.

On my being marched to the platform between two frightful-looking men, whose coats and trousers seemed to have been dyed in gore, and who, to make "assurance doubly sure," wore on their waist-belts the word "September" painted in broad characters, I was then interrogated in nearly the same style as before. I gave them, as before, brief answers.

"Who are you?" asked the principal distributor of rabble justice.

My answer was—

"A man." (Murmurs on the platform.)

"Whence come you?"

"From your prison."

"You are not a Frenchman?"

"No, thank heaven!" (Murmurs again.)

"Beware, sir, of insolence to the tribunal. We can send you instantly to punishment."

"I know it. Why, then, try me at all?"

"Because, prisoner, we desire to hear the truth first."

"First or last, can you bear to hear it?" (Angry looks, but more attention.)

"We have no time to waste—the business of the Republic must be done. Are you a citizen?"

"I am;—a citizen of the world."

"You must not equivocate with justice. Where did you live before you were arrested?"

"On the globe." (A half-suppressed laugh among the crowd in the background.)

"Of what profession?"

"None."

"On what then do you live, have lived, or expect to live?"

"To-day on nothing, for your guards have given me nothing. Yesterday I lived on what I could get. To-morrow it depends on circumstances whether I shall want anything." (A low murmur of applause among the bystanders, who now gathered closer to the front.)

"Prisoner," said the chief, swilling a glass of cognac to strengthen the solemnity of his jurisprudence, "the Republic must not be trifled with. You are arraigned of *incivisme*. Of what country are you a subject?"

"Of France, while I remain on her territory."

"Have you fought for France?"

"I have,—for her laws, her liberty, her property, and her honour." ("Bravo!" from the crowd.)

"Yet you are not a Republican?"

"No—no more than you are."

This produced confusion on the bench. The hit was contemptuously accidental; but it was a home-thrust at the chief, who had formerly been a domestic in the Tuileries,

and was still strongly suspected of being a spy of the Bourbons. A little spruce fellow on the bench, who had already exhibited a desire to take a share in the interrogatory, now thrust his head over the table, and said in his most searching tone—

"To come to the point—prisoner, how do you live? What are your means? All honest men must have visible means. That is *my* question." (All eyes were turned on me.)

I was now growing angry; and pointing to the pile of purses and watches on the table—

"No man," said I, "need ask what are *your* visible means when they see that pile before you. Yet I doubt if that proves you to be an honest man. That is *my* answer."

The little inquisitor looked furious, and glanced towards the chief for protection; but his intrusion had provoked wrath in that quarter, and his glance was returned with a rigid smile.

"Prisoner," said the head of the tribunal, "though the question was put improperly, it was in itself a proper one. How do you live?"

"By my abilities."

"That is a very doubtful support in these times."

"I do not recommend *you*, or any of those round you, to make the experiment," was my contemptuous answer.

The bystanders gave a general laugh, in which even the guard joined. To turn the laugh against one is the most unpardonable of all injuries in France, and my answer roused up the whole tribunal. They scarcely gave themselves the trouble of a consultation. A few nods and whispers settled the whole affair; and the chief, standing up and drawing his sabre from its sheath—then the significant custom of those places of butchery—pronounced the fatal words, "Guilty of *incivisme*. Let the criminal be conducted to *la Force*,"—the well-known phrase for immediate execution.

The affectation of cowardice is as childish as the affectation of courage; but I felt a sensation at that moment which took me by surprise. I had been perfectly assured of my sentence from the first glance at the judges. If ever there was a spot on earth which deserved Dante's motto of

Erebus, it was the revolutionary tribunal. Despair was written all over it, in characters impossible to be mistaken. I had fixed my resolution to go through the whole scene, if not with heroism, at least with that decent firmness which becomes a man; yet the sound of the words which consigned me to the scaffold struck me with a general chill. My feet refused to move, my lips to breathe; all objects swam round me; and, sick to fainting, I blindly thrust out my hand to save me from falling and thus giving the last triumph to my murderers.

At this decisive moment I found my hand caught by a powerful grasp, and a strong voice exclaiming, "Messieurs, I demand the delay of this sentence, The criminal before you is of higher importance to the state than the wretches whom justice daily compels you to sacrifice. His crime is of a deeper dye. I exhibit the mandate of the government, to arrest the act of the tribunal, and order him to be reserved until he reveals the whole of the frightful plots which endanger the Republic."

The speaker then advanced to the platform, and, taking a paper from his bosom, displayed to the court and the crowd the order for my being remanded to prison, signed by the Triumvirate, whose word was law in France. The crowd instantly pushed forward to witness another trial of sarcasm between me and my judges. But this the new authority sternly forbade.

"The prisoner," said he, in a dictatorial tone, "is now in *my* charge. He is a prisoner of state—an Englishman—an agent of the monster Pitt" (he paused, and was answered with a general shudder); "and, above all, has actually been in arms with the fiend Brunswick" (a general groan), "and with those worse than fiends, those parricides, those emigrant nobles, who have come to burn our harvests, slay our wives and children, and destroy the proudest monument of human wisdom, the grandest triumph of human success, and the most illustrious monument of the age of regeneration,—the Republic of France." Loud acclamations followed this popular rhetoric; and the panegyrist, grasping me by the arm, walked with me rapidly out of court. All made way for him, and, before another word could be uttered by the astounded bench, we were in one of the covered

carriages reserved for prisoners of the higher rank, and on our way, at full gallop, through the intricate streets of Paris.

All this was done with such haste that I had scarcely time to know what my own emotions were; but the relief from immediate death, or rather from those depressing and overwhelming sensations which perhaps make its worst bitterness, was something, and hope dawned on me once more. Still it was wholly in vain that I attempted to make my man of mystery utter a word; nothing could extort a syllable from him. Yet the idea that my rescue was not without a purpose predominated; and I was beginning even to imagine that I already felt the fresh air of the fields, and that our journey would terminate outside the walls of Paris, when the carriage came to a full stop, and, by the light of a torch streaming on the wind, I saw the gate of the St. Lazare. But, at the moment when my foot was on the step of the vehicle, my companion stooped forward, and uttered in my ear the word "Mordecai." I was hurried onward, and the carriage drove away.

This talismanic word changed the current of my thoughts at once. It had so often and so powerfully operated in my favour, that I could scarcely doubt its effect once more; yet before me were the stern realities of confinement. What dexterity of friendship, or even the stronger love of woman, could make my dungeon vanish into "thin air"? Still there had been an interposition, and to that interposition, whether for future good or ill, it was clearly due that I was not already flung, a headless trunk, into a nameless grave.

CHAPTER XXII.

As I passed again through the cloisters, my ear was caught by the sound of music and dancing. The contrast was strong to the scene from which I had just returned. To my look of surprise the turnkey answered, "Perhaps you have forgotten that this is Decadi; on this night we always have our masquerade. If you have not got a dress I shall

supply you. My wife is a *friplère* in the Antoine; she supplies all the civic *fêtes* with costumes, and you may have any dress you like, from a grand seignior with his turban down to a *colporteur* with his pack, or a watchman with his nightcap."

I longed to lay down my aching brains upon my pillow, and forget the time. But prisoners have no choice; and the turnkey, after repeating his recommendations that I should not commit an act of such profound offence as to appear in the assembly without a domino—if I should take nothing else from the store of the most popular *marchands* in Paris, the wife of his bosom—at last, with a shake of his head at my want of taste, unlocked the gate, and thrust me into the midst of my old quarters, the chapel.

There a new scene indeed awaited me. The place, which I had left filled with trembling clusters of people—whole families clinging to each other in terror, loud or mute, but all in the deepest dread of their next summons—I found in a state of the most extravagant festivity:—the chapel lighted up from floor to roof, bouquets planted wherever it was possible to fix an artificial flower, gaudy wreaths depending from the galleries, and all the genius of this country of extremes lavished on attempts at decoration. Rude as the materials were, they produced at first sight a remarkably striking effect. More striking still was the spectacle of the whole multitude, in every grotesque dress of the world, dancing away as if life was but one festival.

As I stood aloof for a while, wholly dazzled by the glare, the movement, and the multitude, I was recognized by some of my "old" acquaintance—the acquaintance of twenty-four hours;—but here time, like everything else, had changed its meaning, and a new influx had recruited the hall. Cassini and some others came forward and welcomed me like one who had returned from the tomb—the news of the day was given and exchanged—a bottle of champagne was prescribed as the true medicine for my lowness of pulse—and I gradually gave myself up to the spirit of the hour.

As I wandered through the crowd, a mask dressed as a sylph bent its head over my shoulder, and I heard the words, "Why are you not in a domino?" I made some

careless answer. "Go and get one immediately," was the reply. "Take this card, fasten it on your robe, and meet me here again." The mask put a card marked with a large rose into my hand, and glided off among the crowd. I still lingered, leaning against a pillar of the aisle. The mask again approached me. "Monsieur Anglais," was the whisper, "you do not know your friends. Go and furnish yourself with a domino. It is essential to your safety." "Who are my friends, and why do you give me this advice?" was my inquiry. The mask lightly tripped round me, laid its ungloved hand on mine, as if in the mere sport of the dance; and, from its whiteness and delicacy, I saw that it was the hand of a female. I was now more perplexed than ever. As the form floated round me with the lightness of a zephyr, it whispered the word "Mordecai," and again flew off into an eddy of the multitude. I now obeyed the command—went to the little shrine where the turnkey's wife had opened her *friperie*, equipped myself with the dress appointed, and, with the card fixed upon my bosom, returned to take my station beside the pillar. But no sylph came again. I listened for that soft, low voice, but listened in vain. I consoled myself by asking, "What was all this but the common sport of a masquerade?"

However, an object soon drew the general attention so strongly as to put an end to private curiosity for a while. This was a mask in the uniform of a national guard, but so outrageously fine that his *entrée* excited a universal burst of laughter. But when, after a few displays of what was apparently all but intoxication, he began a detail of his own exploits, it was evident that the whole was a daring caricature; and as nothing could be less popular among us than the heroes of the shops, the "Colonels Calicot," and "moustaches *au comptoir*," all his burlesque told incomparably. The old officers among us, the Vendéans, and all the ladies—for the sex are aristocrats under every government and in every region of the globe—were especially delighted. "Charlemagne Fripon," colonel of the "brave battalion of the Marais," was evidently worth a dozen field-marshals, in his own opinion; and his declared contempt for Vendôme, Marlborough, and Frederick le Grand, was only less piquant than his perfect imitation and keen burlesque of Santerre,

Henriot, and our municipal warriors. At length, when his plaudits and popularity were at their height, he proposed a general toast to the "young heroism" of the capital, and prefaced it by a camp song, well known in the old French service.

The dashing style in which it was given by "Colonel Charlemagne Fripon" of the "brave battalion of the Marais," his awkward imitation of the old *régime*, and his affectation of military nonchalance, excited shouts of applause. His performance was encored, and he was danced round by a group of nymphs and graces, among whom his towering figure looked like a grenadier of Brobdignag in the circle of a Lilliputian light company. He carried on the farce for a while with great adroitness and animation; but at length, putting the circle of tinsel and tiffany aside, and striding up to me, he insisted on making me a recruit for the "brave battalion of the Marais." But I had no desire to play a part in this pantomime, and tried to disengage myself. One word again made me a captive—that word was now "Lafontaine;" and, at the same moment, I saw the sylph bounding to my side. What was I to think of this extraordinary combination? All was as strange as a dream. The "colonel," as if fatigued, leaned against the pillar, and slightly removing his mask, I saw, with sudden rejoicing, the features of that gallant young friend whom I had almost despaired of ever seeing again. "Wait in this spot until I return," was all that I heard before he and the sylph had waltzed away far down the hall.

I waited long, in growing anxiety; but the pleasantry of the night went on as vividly as ever, and some clever *tableaux vivants* varied the quadrilles. While all eyes were fixed on a well-performed picture of Hector and Andromache, and the hero was in the act of taking the plumed helmet from his brow, with a grace which enchanted our whole female population, an old Savoyard and his daughter came up, the one playing the hand-organ of their country, and the other dancing to her tambourine. This was pretty, but my impatience was ill disposed to look or listen, when, the old man's mask being half turned aside, I again saw my friend. He now moved slowly through the crowd, and I followed. We gradually twined our way through the laby-

rinth of pillars, leaving the festivity further and further behind, until we came to a low door, at which the Savoyard tapped, and, a watchword being given, the cell was opened. There our robes and masks were laid aside; we found peasant dresses, for which we exchanged them; and following a muffled figure, who carried a lantern, we commenced our movement once more. At length we came to a stop, and our guide lifting up a ponderous stone which covered the entrance to a deep and dark staircase, we began to descend. I now, with a new feeling of security, heard the voice of Lafontaine at my side. "I doubt," said he, "whether a hundred years ago any one of us would have ventured on a night march of this kind; for be it known to you that we are now in the vaults of the convent, and shall have to go through a whole regiment of monks and abbots in full parade." I observed that, "if we were to meet them at all, they would be less likely to impede our progress dead than alive;" but I still advised Lafontaine to allude as little as he could to the subject, lest it might have the effect of alarming our fair companion. "There is no fear of that," he whispered, "for little Julie is in love with M. le Comte, our gallant guide; and a girl of eighteen desperately in love is afraid of nothing."

We now went on drearily and wearily through a range of catacombs, stopping from time to time to ascertain whether we were pursued, and occasionally not a little startled by the sudden burst of sound that came from the revelry above through the ventilators of these enormous vaults.

The way was long, damp, and heart-sickening, from the fear of pursuit and the dread of finding some obstacle at the close. But these were not times for repairing old convents. We found no further obstacle than a decayed portcullis, one of whose bars easily gave way, and we emerged into the open air. Yet we had not recollected the moat which surrounded the building. There it lay, broad and deep. We were all in consternation. To return would be misery; to remain was impossible; to be taken was death. To attempt the drawbridge was hopeless, for there we heard the tread of the sentinel upon its creaking boards.

We held our little council of war, and with as little effect as councils of war in general. The count endeavoured to persuade his little Julie to escape by the catacomb ar-

leave him to his fate. But this she indignantly refused, and I left them with their arms round each other's necks, weeping and repeating vows of eternal fidelity. Lafontaine, bold as a lion, yet easily dejected, wrapped his head in his cloak, and flung himself on the ground, determined to be shot as soon as daylight should discover him to the sentinel.

My English nature was of "sterner stuff;" and thinking that the day of evil could not be put off too far, I picked my way among the works of many a year of dilapidation, along the edge of the fosse, and was returning hopelessly when I observed a light moving along the opposite side. In a few moments more I saw by the gleam some persons descend the bank, get into a boat, and, crossing the moat, pass along at the foot of the wall. From the few words which escaped them, it was evident that they were a party of the secret police, conveying to the convent, according to the Jacobin custom, a prisoner whom it might have been hazardous to arrest in open day.

I flew back to my despairing friends, embarked them in the boat, and was on the point of stepping in after them when a shot was fired from the wall above my head. I felt myself struck; and thinking that I was mortally wounded, I pushed the boat off, and fell. It had scarcely reached the opposite side before the guard sprang out upon me; and dying, as I then believed myself to be, I was hurried back into the St. Lazare.

That morning was one of the "grand days" of the guillotine. My wound was no sooner stanched, and the surgeons of the prison had no sooner given their opinion that I was not likely to die by the bullet, than I was ordered to mount one of the long file of wagons in which the "conspirators against the freedom of the human race" were to finish their career. The popular love of pageantry was not forgotten in the display, and we were preceded, surrounded, and followed by trumpets, drums, and troops, enough to have formed the triumph of a successful general. Our procession had more than the usual object of those dreadful displays: it was at once an act of revenge and an act of policy.

We had frequent halts, and I had full leisure to gaze around; for, rapidly as the guillotine performed its terrible task, our procession had been extended by additional victims from every prison which we passed, and we passed so

many that I began to think the city one vast dungeon. What strange curiosity is it that could collect such myriads to look upon us! Every street was crowded with a living mass; every casement was filled; every roof presented a line of eyes straining for a glance below. Instead of the crowd of a populous city, I could have believed that I saw the population of a kingdom poured in and compressed into the streets through which we wound our slow way. From time to time a shout arose as some conspicuous member of the Convention made his appearance in the vehicle of death; then execrations, scoffs, and insults, of every bitterness, were poured upon the unfortunate culprit, who seldom attempted to make any other return than a gesture of despair or a supplication to be suffered to die in peace.

Our progress lasted half the day; and the sun was already near its setting when the wagon in which I sat turned into the Place de Grève. But I must, I dare, describe no more. I shall not say what I saw in that general receptacle of murder,—the range of low biers which lay surrounding the scaffold, now the last resting-place of men who, but a few hours before, flourished in the possession of every faculty of our being, and, still more, with all those faculties in the full ardour of public life; with brilliant ambition to stimulate them, with prospects of boundless power to reward, and with that most exhilarating and tempting spell of human existence, popular acclamation, resounding in their ears. I had personally known some of them, I had seen them all; and now I beheld those highly-gifted and fiery-souled men shaken down in an instant like a shock of corn—swept to death as if they were but so many weeds—extinguished in one moment, and in the next flung aside, a heap of clay, to make room for other dead. And this was republicanism—this was the reign of knowledge, the triumph of freedom, the glory of political regeneration! Even in that most trying moment, when I saw the wagon, in which I had remained the last survivor but one, give up my unfortunate companion to the executioner, my parting words to him, as I shook his cold hand, were—"Better the forest and the savage than republicanism! Doubly accursed be murder when it takes the name of freedom!"

I then resolved to see and hear no more; gave a brief and still a fond recollection to England; and committing my spirit to the Great Disposer of human things, I prepared for the final blow.

But I was again to be respited. While I awaited the summons to mount the fatal steps, a party of dragoons rode into the square, seized every wagon without a moment's delay, and ordered the whole to be driven out for the reception of a column of wounded, both French and Austrians, who, having been brought to the city gates, now waited the means of transport to the great military hospital at Vincennes.

The colonel of dragoons in charge of the column had applied to the government for the means of carriage; they referred him to the municipality, who referred him to the staff of the National Guard, who referred him to the prefect, who referred him to the subprefect, who referred him to his subordinate functionaries, who knew nothing on the subject, until the colonel accidentally heard that the requisite vehicles were to be seen in the Place de Grève. Indignant at the impertinences of office, and regarding it as the natural right of the soldier to be first served in all cases, he sent off a squadron at full speed to make the seizure. The affair was settled at once. The remonstrances of the civil officers against our being thus withdrawn from their grasp were answered by bursts of laughter at their impudence, and blows with the flat of the sabre for their presumption. The National Guard soon showed that they had no wish to try their bayonets against those expert handlers of the sword; and the whole train of fifty or sixty wagons, of which about a tenth remained full, were hurried down the Boulevard, leaving the scaffold a sinecure. At the barrier a new arrangement took place; the wounded were piled into the carriages along with us, and the whole were marched to the grand depôt of the garrison at Paris.

I had seen Vincennes already, and under trying circumstances; its frowning physiognomy had not since been altered, nor, as a prison, was it more congenial to my feelings than before.

Life to me was now as stagnant as the ditch round the

fortress; all feeling was as languid as the heavy air of our casemates. But this was to change.

The commandant one day walked up to me, and with an air of embarrassment put a sealed letter into my hands. It was marked *secret and immediate.* I opened it, and I shall not say with what feelings I saw—an order for my attendance, signed ROBESPIERRE.

If the grim majesty of death had put his signature in person to this order, it could not have borne a more mortal aspect. I felt a pang; but it did not continue long. Inevitable things are not the hardest to be borne. At all events, there was no time for pondering on the subject; the carriage which had brought the order and the government *huissier* was at the gate. The commandant, with an ominous look, wished me "good fortune." I hurried into the carriage, and we flew on the road to Paris.

On reaching the barrier, we turned to the quarter of the Luxembourg, and stopped at the gate of a moderate-looking house. I was shown into a small and simple room, where I found a man advanced in years and of a striking aspect. He said not a word, and I had no inclination to converse. The one or two hesitating syllables which I addressed to him were answered only by a bow, and a look as if he did not understand the language. I spoke no more; and I awaited the approach of the terror of France and horror of Europe during half an hour which seemed to me interminable.

The door at last opened, a valet came in, and the name of "Robespierre" thrilled through every fibre; but, instead of the frowning giant to which my fancy had involuntarily attached the name, I saw following him a slight figure, highly dressed and even with the air of a fop on the stage. Holding a perfumed handkerchief in one hand, which he waved towards his face like one indulging in the fragrance, and a diamond snuff-box in the other, he advanced with a sliding step, and, after a sallow smile to me, and a solemn bow to the old man, congratulated himself on the "honour of the acquaintance which he had been indebted to his friend Elnathan for making in person."

I was all astonishment: I had come in expectation of my death-warrant—I had a reception like an ambassador.

I now perplexed myself with the idea that I had been mistaken for some stranger in the foreign diplomacy; but I was soon set right by his pronouncing my name, and making some allusions to "the influence of my family in the British parliament."

Yet I was still in the tiger's den, and I expected to feel the talons. I was happily disappointed; the claw was sheathed in velvet. A slight refection was brought in by an embroidered domestic, and it was evidently the wish of this tremendous demagogue to appear the man of refinement for the time.

"My friend Elnathan," said he, "has informed me that you wish to return to England?"

This was pronounced in the meekest tone of interrogatory; and, with eyes scarcely raised to either of us, he awaited my confirmation of his idea.

It was given most unhesitatingly; and my glance at the countenance of the old man was answered by another, which told me that I saw the correspondent of my friend Mordecai.

"The circumstances are simply these," said the dictator, in the same delicate tone; "the government has occasion to arrange some matters of importance with the British cabinet. The successes of the Republic have raised jealousies, which it is for the advantage of human nature that we should reconcile if possible. France and England are the only free countries: their hostility can only be injurious to freedom."

He paused, and his cold grey eye, after traversing the floor, was slowly raised to me.

I admitted my perfect agreement in the opinion that "wherever national conflict could be avoided, it was the business of all rational men to maintain peace." I saw a grim smile pass over his sallow features, probably at having found another dupe. Elnathan sat in profound silence, without the movement of a muscle.

Robespierre, rising, now took a letter from a portfolio, and put it into the Jew's hand.

"The English government," said he, "have expressed some unnecessary uneasiness at the progress of opinion in Europe. The late victory which has decided the fate of

the Austrian Netherlands will probably increase that uneasiness. Communications through the usual channels are slow, imperfect, and open to espionage. I have therefore applied to my friend Elnathan to point out some individual in whom he has perfect confidence, and through whom the communication can be made. He has named you."

Elnathan, with his huge hands clasped on his breast, and his bushy brows bent deep over his eyes, bent forward, with almost oriental affirmation.

"When will you be ready to set out for Calais?"

"This moment," was my willing answer.

"No, we are not quite prepared." He walked for a while about the room, pondering on the subject; then, turning to Elnathan, he directed the Jew to get ready some papers connected with the financial dealings which his Jewish brethren were then beginning to carry on extensively throughout Europe. Those were to be arranged by the next day, and for those I must wait.

"You shall be under the care of Elnathan," said the master of my fate. "He will obtain your passports from the Foreign-office, and you will leave Paris to-morrow evening at furthest. We must avoid all observation in this matter, Elnathan," said he, turning to the Jew. "Paris is a hotbed of spies. *Apropos*, M. Marston, where do you propose to spend the evening?"

"Madame Roland gives a *soirée* to-night," humbly interposed the Jew.

"Ha!—that is the best of all. You must go there. You will be seen by all the world. Elnathan will introduce you to the 'philosophic lady' of the circle." He then resumed his pacing round the room. I could observe the vulpine expression of his visage, the twitching of his hands, the keen sidelong look of a man living in perpetual alarm. I saw the *man*.

We now prepared to take our leave; but he suddenly resumed the *petit-maître*, flourished his perfumed handkerchief again, gave a passing smile to the mirror, and offered me the honours of his snuff-box with the affectation of the stage. But, as we reached the door of the apartment, he made a long, single stride, which brought him up close to me. "Remember, sir," said he, in a stern voice, wholly

unlike the past, "you have it in charge from *me* to inform your government of the actual feeling of France. It is true that there are madmen among us—Brissotins, Girondists, and other enthusiasts—who talk of war. *I* tell you that they *are* madmen, and that *I* will have no war. There may be conspirators, who wish to shake the Republic, and look to war as the means of raising themselves on its ruins. *I* tell you, and you may tell your Cabinet, that they shall not accomplish their objects here, and that, if they accomplish them, it will be alone the fault and the folly of England."

I happened to ascertain shortly afterwards that, on this very day, Robespierre had presided at a council which sent off orders to Dumourier to open the Scheldt, the notorious and direct preliminary to war with England. Such is the sincerity of diplomacy!

CHAPTER XXIII.

I SPENT the rest of the day with Elnathan. His hotel was splendid, and all that surrounded him gave the impression of great opulence; but it was obvious that he lived like a man in a gunpowder magazine. He had several sons and daughters, whom, in his fears, he had contrived to send for safety to his connections in Germany; and he now lived alone, his wife having been dead for some years. All his wealth could not compensate him for the anxiety of his position; and doubtless he would have perished long before in the general massacre of the opulent, except for his being the chief channel of moneyed communication between the government and Germany. In the course of our lonely, but most *recherché*, dinner, he explained to me slightly the means of my recent preservation. The police-officer had acquainted him with my being the bearer of a letter from his friend. The message of the head of the Republic, requiring a confidential bearer of documents, struck him as affording an opportunity for my liberation; and no time was lost in proposing my name to authority.

"And now," said my entertainer, after drinking my safe arrival in a bumper of imperial tokay, "*en avant* for

Madame Roland." We drove to a splendid mansion in the Rue de la Révolution.

I observed to Elnathan, as we passed through the long and stately suite of rooms, that, "to judge from the furniture, republicanism was not republican everywhere."

"Nowhere, but in the streets or the prisons," was his reply, in a whisper. "Since the Austrian left it, the whole hotel has been furnished anew, at the most profuse expense, which I had the honour of supplying. Roland is a great personage, but a nobody, a mill-horse at the wheel of office. He is probably drudging over his desk at this moment; but Madame is of another mould. *La voilà!*" He turned, and made a profound bow to a very showy female who had advanced from a group for the purpose of receiving the Jew and the stranger. I had now, for the first time, the honour of seeing this remarkable personage. Her figure was certainly striking, and her physiognomy conveyed a great deal of her character for intelligence and decision. She had evidently dressed herself on the model of the *classique;* and though not handsome enough for a Venus, nor light enough for a nymph, she might have made a tolerable Minerva.

She was "delighted, charmed, enchanted," to make my acquaintance. "She had owed many marks of friendship to M. Elnathan; but this surpassed them all—she admired the English—they were always the friends of liberty—France was now beginning a race in the arena of freedom. The rivalry was brilliant, the prize was inestimable." I could only bow. Again, "She was enraptured to meet an Englishman, the countryman of Milton and Wilkes, of Charles Fox and William Tell." I fear that I gave a smile to her remorseless *mêlange.* But she was above all embarrassment, and still poured out her historic raptures.

Madame had now discharged her first volley; and she wheeled back upon a group of members of the Convention, —sullen-looking sages, with wild hair hanging over their shoulders, and the genuine Carmagnole physiognomy. With these men she was evidently deep in vehement discussion, and her whole volume of politics was flung at their heads with as little mercy as her literary stores had been poured upon me.

But the crowd pressed towards another object of curiosity, and I followed it, under the guidance of my Asmodeus, to a music-room, splendidly fitted up, and filled with the most select orchestra of the capital. But it was an amateur that was there to attract all eyes and ears. "Madame de Fontenai," whispered the Jew, as he glanced towards a woman of a singularly expressive countenance and statue-like form, half sitting, half reposing, on a sofa. She was surrounded by a group soliciting her for a "few notes, a suspiration, a *soupçon*" of, as Elnathan observed to me, "one of the most delicious voices which had ever crossed the Pyrenees," and the Jew had all the musical taste of his nation. At last the siren consented, and a harp was brought and placed before her with the same homage which might have attended an offering to the Queen of Cyprus, in her own island, three thousand years ago.

After a brief and brilliant prelude, which showed her perfect command of the instrument, and trying her voice in a few notes whose sweetness justified Elnathan's panegyric—throwing up her fine eyes, as if to meet some descending inspiration—she began.

The song closed in a burst of plaudits as general and marked as if they had been given to a *prima donna* in a theatre, and she received them as if she was in a theatre.

"You should be presented to Madame de Fontenai," was my guide's suggestion. "She is our reigning *célébrité* at present, as Madame Roland is our *publicité*. You see we are nice in our distinctions. I shall probably to-night show you another, a very handsome creature indeed, who has obtained the title of our *félicité*."

"But who or what is this fascinating creature?"

"The daughter of Cabarus, the Spanish ambassador here some years ago. She is now a widow, rich, giving *recherché* suppers, followed by all the world, and, as she declares, *persecuted* by M. Tallien, who will probably succeed in making her Madame Tallien."

I had now the honour of being presented, and was received with very flattering attention. This I probably owed to the Jew, who seemed to have the key to every one's smiles, as he had to most of their escritoires. She was certainly a person of most distinguished appearance.

Not handsome, so far as beauty depends on feature; for she had the olive tinge of her country, and she had the *not* Spanish *petit nez retroussé*. But her figure was fine, and never was any costume more studied to exhibit all its graces. Accustomed as I had become to foreign life, I acknowledge that I was a little surprised at the unhesitatingly *classical* development of her form;—arms naked to the shoulder, or clasped only with golden serpents; a robe *à la Diane*, and succinct as ever huntress wore; silver sandals, a jewelled cestus, and a tunic of white satin deeply embroidered with gold, depending simply to the knee!

But when she placed me on the sofa beside her, and entered into conversation, everything was forgotten in her incomparable elegance of manner. Before a few minutes had elapsed I could fully comprehend her title to the renown of the most captivating conversationist of Paris.

As I at length relinquished this enviable and envied position, to give way to the crowd who brought their tributs to the *fauteuil*, or rather the shrine, of this dazzling woman —"You have still," said my companion, "to see another of our sovereigns; for, as we have a triumvirate in the Tuileries, the world of taste is ruled by three rivals, and they are curiously characteristic of the classes from which they have sprung. The lady of the mansion you must have perceived to be republican in every sense of the word—clever undoubtedly, but as undoubtedly *bourgeoise*."

I remarked that she had, at least, the important merit of giving very splendid entertainments.

"Yes, and of also possessing as honest a heart as she possesses a rash brain. She is kind, generous, and even rational, where she has not a revolution to make or to unmake. But suffer her to touch on politics, and you might as well bring a lunatic into the light of the full moon."

CHAPTER XXIV.

We now plunged into the centre of a circle of men in military costume, full of the war, and criticizing Dumourier's campaign with the utmost severity. As I listened, I observed a man, of a pale thin visage, like one suffering from ill health

or excessive mental toil, but of a singularly intellectual expression, listening to the group of tacticians with a quiet smile.

"Let me have the honour of presenting M. Marston to the minister-at-war," was my introduction to the celebrated Carnot. The minister entered at once, and good-humouredly, into conversation.

"You must not think our favourite general," said he, "altogether the military novice which those gentlemen of the National Guard have decided him to be. I feel an additional interest in the question, because I myself had a little official battle to fight to place him at the head of the army of Flanders. But I saw that he had military talent, and that, with a republic, cancels all sins."

I made some passing remark on the idleness of disputing the ability of an officer who answered cavils by conquests, observing that the only rational altar raised by the Romans, a people of warriors, was to "Good Fortune."

"Ah, yes, you think, in the Choiseul style, that the first question in choosing a general should be, 'Is he lucky?' I must own that General Dumourier has fought his battle against principle. But those gentlemen do not perceive that *there* lies the very merit for which the Republic must uphold him. His troops were in an exhausted country; they had provisions but for two days; he must fight at once or retreat. Another general might have retreated, and made his apology by the state of his havresacs; Dumourier took the other alternative. He fought; and the general who fights is the only general who gains victories. France," he continued, "is surrounded with enemies. To conquer we must astonish. If we wait to be attacked, we must feel the weakness of defence—the spirit of the French soldier is attack. Within the frontier he is a bird in a cage; beyond it he is a bird in the air. Why has France always triumphed in the beginning of a war? Because she has always invaded. The French soldier must march, he must fight, he must feel that he hazards everything, before he rises to that pitch of daring, that ardour, that *élan*, by which he gains everything. Let him, like the Greek, burn his ships behind him, and from that moment he is invincible."

I listened with strong interest to this development of the

principles on which the great war of Europe was to be sustained. The speaker uttered his oracular sentences with a glow which left his hearers almost as breathless as himself. I saw before me the living genius of French victory.

While we were standing, silenced by this burst, an incident occurred as if expressly to give demonstration to his theory. An aide-de-camp entered the room bringing despatches from the army of Flanders. He had but just arrived in Paris, and, not finding the war-minister at his bureau, had followed him. Of course the strongest conceivable curiosity was excited, but not a syllable was to be learned from the official mystery of the aide-de-camp. He made his advance to the minister, deposited the despatch in his hands, and then drew up his stately figure, impervious to all questioning. Carnot retired to an alcove to read the missive, and in the mean time the general anxiety rose to an absolute fever.

At length Carnot, probably wholly forgetting the scene of suffering which he had left behind, came forward with the important despatch open in his hand. When he read the date, and pronounced the words "Head-quarters, Brussels," all was known, and all was rapture. The French deserve good news beyond all other people of the globe, for none ever enjoy it so much. I thought that they would have embraced the little minister to death; no living man certainly was ever nearer being pressed into Elysium.

Supper was now announced, and we were led into a new suite of rooms, filled with all the luxuries and hospitalities of a most sumptuous entertainment. Carnot, now doubly popular, was surrounded by the whole *élite* of name and beauty. But, whether from the politeness by which even the republicans of former rank were desirous of distinguishing themselves from the *roturier*, or with the purpose of making his opinions known in that country which has been always the great tribunal of European opinion, and always will be, he made *me* sit down by his side.

He talked largely of our interests, and continually reverted to the advantages of a closer alliance with France. "The two countries," said he, "are made for combination; combined, they could conquer the globe—France the em-

pire of the land, England the empire of the sea. Nature has divided between them the sceptre of the world."

I observed that "when the conquest was achieved, the victors, like Augustus and Antony, might quarrel at last."

"Well, then, even if they did, the combat would finish in a day what it would have taken centuries of the tardy wars of old times to decide. Six hours at Pharsalia settled the civil wars of Rome, and pacified the world for five hundred years."

"But which side would be content to be the beaten one?" I asked.

"Neither," replied a cynical, but remarkably broad-foreheaded and deep-browed personage, at the opposite side of the table. "The combat would be eternal, or must end in mutual ruin. A universal empire would be beyond the government of man by law or his control by the sword. I prefer enlightening the people until they shall want no control."

"But will they buy your lamp?" said Carnot, with a smile.

"At least they have done so pretty extensively, if I am to believe the public. It was but this day that I received a notice that there had been sent forth the hundred-thousandth copy of my 'Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?'"

"That was not a lamp, but a firebrand," said a hollow voice at a distance down the table, which reminded me of the extraordinary orator whom I had heard in the Jacobin club. Carnot looked round to discover this strange accuser, and added, in a loud and stern tone—

"Whether lamp or firebrand, I pronounce to all good Frenchmen that it was a great gift to France. It was the grammar of a new language, the language of liberty. It was the sound of a trumpet, the trumpet of revolution. Still, M. de Sièyes," said he, turning to the author of this celebrated performance, "all things have their time, and yours is not yet come. I cannot give up the soldier. I am for no civil movement when the country is in peril. You must sweep war from your gates before you can sit down to teach a people. Even then the task is not easy. To know nothing, and to know something badly, are two kinds of ignorance, which will always tempt the majority of mankind."

"Is there not a third kind of ignorance more dangerous still—that of knowing more than one *ought* to know?" interposed another speaker, whose countenance had already struck me.

Carnot smiled, and said to me in a low tone, "That is a touch at Sièyes. Talleyrand and he hate each other with the hatred of rival beauties."

It was evident that Sièyes was stung. He almost sprang from his seat. I saw his powerful countenance flush to the forehead. But he merely said, "Pray, monsieur, what is a vizard? Is it not the favourite instrument of a hypocrite?"

"Monsieur, I shall have the honour to inform you. A vizard is a contrivance for concealment, whether in pasteboard or in an inflexible visage—whether in a woman who seeks to disguise her features, or in a man who seeks to hide his heart—whether in a masquerader or an assassin. For example, when I hear a spy talk of his honesty, an intriguer of his conscience, a renegade of his candour, or a pensioner of his patriotism, I do not require to look at him. I say at once that man wears a vizard." He paused a moment. "This," said he, "is the vizard in public life. In private it is the impartiality of authors to their own performances, the justice of partizans, the originality of plagiarists, and the principle of *pamphleteers*."

This daring delivery of sentiment hit so many that it could be resented by none; for no one could have assailed it without making himself responsible to the whole charge. Silence fell upon the table.

"You remind me, Monsieur le Ministre, of the Spartans, who, when they returned from beating the enemy, found their slaves in possession of their households. You conquer Prussians and Austrians on the frontier, and leave monks at home. But, as long as you spare the spiders, you must not complain of cobwebs. Crush intriguers, and you will put an end to intrigue," said the bold ex-bishop.

"The man insults the Republic who charges her citizens with intrigue," was the whispered and very formidable menace of Sièyes. "Monsieur, you have yet to learn what *is* a constitution."

The abbé had incurred some ridicule by his readiness in

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proposing constitutions. His antagonist, like a hornet, instantly fixed his sting upon the naked spot.

"Pardon me, monsieur, I perfectly know what is a modern constitution—it is the credit of a charlatan—it is the stock of a political pedlar, made only for sale to simpletons—it is an umbrella to be taken down when it rains—it is a surtout in summer, and nakedness in winter. It is, in short, a contrivance to make a reputation for a sciolist, and to govern mankind on the principles of a dreamer."

"This is the language of faction," exclaimed Sièyes, indignantly rising.

"No," said his imperturbable antagonist; "the language of faction is the language of quacks; it is the language learned in the clubs and taught in the streets, the language which takes it for granted that the hearer is as destitute of brains as the speaker is of principle." All eyes were now turned on the parties.

But his hearer simply said, yet with a glance of fire—

"Monseigneur, you should remember that you are not now in your old diocese haranguing your chaplains. You forget also that in France the age of quackery is over. There are no more dupes—have *you* your passports ready?"

This produced not even a sneer on the marble countenance of the adversary.

"Monsieur de Sièyes," was the ready reply, "let me not, at least, hear *you* talk of despair. Quackery will never be at an end in France. The quack is a polypus—cut him into a thousand pieces, he only grows the faster; he is a fungus—give him only a stone to cling to, and he covers it; he is the viper—even while he hides in his hole, only preparing to bite in the sunshine, and, when all the world think him frozen for life, only concocting venom for his summer exploits. Quacks will live as long as there are dupes, as leeches will live as long as there are asses' heels to hang on." He then rose, making a profound bow, with "*Bon soir*, monsieur l'abbé—never fear—dupes will be eternal."

This produced some confusion and consternation among the friends of Sièyes. But a new scene of the night was announced, and all flowed towards the private theatre.

I was yet to see more of this daring talker, but I was not surprised to hear next day that he had left Paris at mid-

night, and was gone no one knew whither. I afterwards saw the fugitive, at the head of European councils, a prince and a prime minister, the overthrower of the dynasty by which he rose, the restorer of the dynasty under which he fell, bearing a charmed life, and passing among the havoc of factions, and even escaping from the wrecks of empire, more like an impalpable spirit than a man.

The theatre was fitted up with the taste of a people more essentially theatrical than any other in the world. Not merely the eye, but the tongue, of France is theatrical; not merely the stage, but every portion of private life, every sentiment, every sound, is theatrical; the stage itself is the only natural thing in the country, from Calais to Bayonne.

As we took our seats in the little gilded box, made only for two, though probably for *tête-à-têtes* of a more imaginative order than ours, Elnathan observed to me, "You will now see two of the most remarkable *artistes* in France—Talma, beyond all comparison our first actor; and another, an amateur, whom I think altogether one of the finest women in existence. You may pronounce that she ought to be younger for perfection; but there is a beauty in the fruit as well as in the flower, and not the less beautiful for its being of a different kind. But judge for yourself."

The curtain now drew up, and we saw the commencement of the little *drame* of *Paul et Virginie*. Talma's *entrée* was received with unbounded plaudits. Yet he was so simply dressed, and looked so completely the young wanderer of the cane groves, that I should never have conceived him to be the grand pillar of tragedy in France. He was simply the handsome peasant of the tropics; yet, as his part advanced, I could discover in his deep eye and powerful tone the actor capable of reaching the heights of dramatic passion. He was scarcely above the middle size, with features whose magic consisted in their flexibility. I have never seen a countenance so capable of change as Talma's, and in which the change was so instantaneous and so total. From the most sportive openness, a word threw it into the most indignant storm or the most incurable despair. From wild joy it was suddenly clouded with a weight of sorrow that "refused to be comforted."

But his fascination and ours was complete when Virginie

appeared. Nothing could be less artificial than her costume; the simple dress of Bengalese blue cloth, a few cowrie-shells round her neck, and a shell-comb fastening up the braids of a profusion of raven hair. She came floating, rather than walking, down the mountain path; and her first few words, when Paul rushed forward and knelt to kiss her feet, and the half playful, half fond, air with which she repelled him, seemed to me the most exquisite of all performances. I observed too that her style had more nature in it than even Talma's. I had till then forgotten that he was an actor; but, placed beside her, I could have almost instinctively pronounced that Paul was a Frenchman, and Virginie a Creole. I whispered the remark to Elnathan, who answered that I was right in point of fact; for the representative of Virginie, though not a native of the Mauritius, was of tropical birth—the widow of a French noble who had married her in the colonies, and who had been one of the victims of the Revolution.

"And yet an amateur actress?"

"Yes; but we never ask such questions in France. Everybody does the same. You should see one of our *bals à la victime*, in which the express qualification for a ticket is having lost a relative by the guillotine."

"But who is this charming woman?"

"A woman of birth and fortune, and supposed at this moment to exercise the highest influence with the most influential personage of the government—even the bewitching Madame de Fontenai has given way to her supremacy."

"You have already," said I, "given Madame Roland her place at the head of republicans,—let us suppose Madame de Fontenai the fine and fastidious aristocrat; while this lovely being's elegance of manner and mixture of grace and dignity would make an admirable figure at the head of a French court, if such a thing were not now beyond all possibility."

"Are you aware," said the Jew, with sudden seriousness, "that a prediction, or at least some extraordinary conjecture, on the subject has gone the round of the circles? The tale is, that while she was still a child, in the West Indies, one of the negro dispensers of fortune, an Obi woman, pronounced that she should ascend a throne. I must, how-

ever, add the *finale*, to qualify it—that she should die in an hospital."

"The scale," said I, "goes down too suddenly in that case; she had better remain the beautiful and happy creature that she is. Yet a being formed in that expressive mould was surely not meant either to live or die like the rest of the world."

Such was my first sight of Josephine de Beauharnais.

The ruling genius of the night, the minister's wife, to do honour to the triumphs of the state, had employed the talents of her *décorateurs* actively during our stay at the supper-table; and when the curtain rose for the third act, instead of "a stormy sea and the horrors of shipwreck," according to the stage direction, we saw a stage Olympus, in which the whole *élite* of the Celestials escorted a formidable Bellona-like figure, the cuirassed and helmed Republic, to an altar covered with laurels, and flaming with incense, inscribed "*à la Liberté.*" Some stanzas, more remarkable for their patriotism than their poetry, were chaunted by Minerva, Juno, and the rest of the Olympians, IN HONOUR of the "*jour magnifique de victoire, Jemappes.*" A train of *figurantes*—the monarchies of Europe—came forward dancing and depositing their crowns and sceptres at the foot of the altar (a sign at least tolerably significant); the whole concluding with an exhibition of the bust of Dumourier, on which madame laid a chaplet of laurel, accompanied with a speech in the highest republican style—bust, speech, and madame being all alike received with true Gallic rapture.

On that night to have doubted the "irresistible, universal, and perpetual" triumph of the Republic, would have been high treason to taste, to hospitality, and the ladies; and, for that night, our belief was unbounded. In short, the world, from that hour forth, was to be changed; despotism was extinguished; man was regenerated; balls and suppers were to be the only rivalry of nations; Paris was, of course, to lead France, France, of course, to lead the globe;—all was to be beauty, *bonhomie*, and *bonbons!* Under the shade of the triumphant tricolor, all nations were to waltz, make epigrams, and embrace for ever!

CHAPTER XXV.

ELNATHAN was a man of many cares, and of every kind of wisdom but one—the wisdom of knowing when he had wealth enough. He evidently loved accumulation, and the result was that every hour of his existence was one of alarm. Half the bankers of France were already in prison, and yet he carried on the perilous game of commerce. He was known to be immensely opulent; and he must have regarded the day which passed over his head without seeing his strong boxes put under the government seal, and himself thrown into some *oubliette*, as a sort of miracle. But he was now assailed by a new alarm. War with England began to be rumoured among the bearded brethren of the synagogue; and Elnathan had ships on every sea, from Peru to Japan.

The first shot fired would inevitably pour out the whole naval force of England; and his argosies would put their helms about, and steer for Portsmouth, Plymouth, and every port but a French one. If this formidable intelligence had awakened even the haughtiness of the French government to a sense of public peril, what effect must it not have in the counting-house of a man whose existence was trade? While I was on my pillow, luxuriating in dreams of French *fêtes*, Paul and Virginie carried off to the clouds, and Parisian *belles* dancing cotillons in the bowers of a Mahometan paradise, Elnathan spent the night at his desk, surrounded by his bustling generation of clerks, writing to correspondents at every point of the compass, and preparing insurances with the great London establishments, which I was to carry with me, though unacquainted with the transaction on which so many millions of francs hung trembling.

We parted. The postilions cracked their whips; the little Norman horses tore their way over the rough pavement; the sovereign people scattered off on every side, to save their lives and limbs; and the plain of St. Denis, rich with golden corn, and tracked by lines of stately trees, opened far and wide before me. From the first ascent I gave a *parting* glance to Paris of mingled rejoicing and regret.

I speeded on; everything was animated and animating in my journey. But how much of its colouring was my own!

Was *I* not *free?* Was I not *returning to England?* Was I not approaching scenes, and forms, and the realities of those recollections, which, even in the field of battle and at the foot of the scaffold, had alternately cheered and pained, delighted and distressed me, yet which, even with all their anxieties, were dearer than the most gilded hopes of ambition. Was I not about to meet the gay smile and poignant vivacity of Mariamne? Was I not about to wander in the shades of my paternal castle, to see those relatives who were to shape so large a share of my future happiness, to meet in public life the eminent public men with whose renown the courts and even the camps of Europe were already ringing? And—last, proudest, and most profound feeling of all—was I not to venture near the shrine on which I had placed my idol; to offer her the solemn and distant homage of the heart; perhaps to hear of her from day to day; perhaps to see her noble beauty; perhaps even to *hear* that voice of which the simplest accents sank into my soul?

I drove, with the haste of a courier, to London; and after having deposited my despatches with one of the under-secretaries of the Foreign-office, I flew to Mordecai's den in the city. London appeared to me more crowded than ever, the streets longer, the buildings dingier; and the whole, seen after the smokeless and light-coloured towns of the Continent, looked an enormous manufactory where men wore themselves out in perpetual dimness and bustle to make their bread and die. But my heart beat quickly as I reached the door of that dingiest of all its dwellings, where the lord of hundreds of thousands of pounds burrowed himself from the eyes of mankind.

I knocked, but was long unanswered; at last a meagre clerk, evidently of the "fallen people," and who seemed dug up from the depths of the dungeon, gave me the intelligence that "his master and family had left England." The answer was like an ice-bolt through my frame. This was the moment to which I had looked forward with I shall not say what emotions. I could scarcely define them; but they had a share of every strong, every faithful, and every touching remembrance in my nature. My disappointment was a pang. My head grew dizzy, I reeled, and asked leave

to enter the gloomy door and rest for a moment. But this the guardian of the den was too cautious to allow; and I should have probably fainted in the street but for the appearance of an ancient Rebecca, the wife of the clerk, who, feeling the compassion which belongs to the sex in all instances, and exerting the authority which is so generally claimed by the better-halves of men, pushed her husband back, and led the way into the old cobwebbed parlour.

A glass of water, the sole hospitality of the house, revived me; and after some inquiries alike fruitless with the past, I was about to take my leave, when the clerk, in his removal of some papers not to be trusted within reach of a stranger, dropped from the bundle a letter on which was my name. From its variety of addresses, it had evidently travelled far, and had been returned from half the post-offices of the Continent. It was two months old, but it was from Mordecai; and after alluding to some pecuniary transactions with his foreign brethren, always the first topic, it hurried on in his usual abrupt strain:—"Mariamne has insisted on my leaving England for a while. This is perplexing, as the war must produce a new loan, and London is, after all, the only place where those affairs can be transacted without trouble. My child is well, and yet she looks pallid from time to time, and sheds tears when she thinks herself unobserved. All this may pass away, but it makes me uneasy; and, as she has evidently made up her mind to travel, I have only to give way—for, with all her caprices, she is my child, my only and my beloved child.

"I have heard a good deal of your proceedings from my kinsman in Paris. You have acquitted yourself well, and it shall not be unknown in the quarter where it may be of most service to you. I have been stopped by Mariamne's singing in the next room, and her voice has almost unmanned me; she is melancholy of late, and her only music now is taken from those ancestral hymns which our nation regard as the songs of the captivity.

"You may rely on my intelligence—a war is *inevitable*. You may also rely on my conjecture, that it will be the most desperate war which Europe has seen—one that will

break up *foundations*, as well as break down superstructures, —not a war of politics, but of principles; not a war for conquest, but for ruin. This will be the harvest of the men of money. It is unfortunate that your money is all lodged for your commission; otherwise, in the course of a few operations, you might make cent. per cent., which I propose to do. *Apropos* of commissions. I had nearly omitted, in my own family anxieties, to mention the object for which I began my letter. I have *failed* in arranging the affair of your commission! This was not for want of zeal. But the prospect of a war has deranged and inflamed everything. The young nobility have besieged the Horse Guards. But why shall a man of your sense be dependent on a single cast of the die? Think of my suggestion. Are there not a hundred other pursuits in which an intelligent mind like your own might follow fortune? You have seen enough of campaigning to know that it is not all a flourish of trumpets; has the world but one gate, and that the Horse Guards? If my personal judgment were to be asked, I should feel no regret for a disappointment which may have come only to turn your knowledge and ability to purposes not less suitable to an active spirit, nor less likely to produce a powerful impression on the world—the only thing, after all, worth living for! You may laugh at this language from a man of my country and my trade. But even *I* have my ambition; and you may yet discover it to be not less bold than if I carried the lamp of Gideon or wielded the sword of the Maccabee. I must stop again; my poor restless child is coming into the room at this moment, complaining of the cold in one of the finest days of summer. Finding that I am writing to you, she sends her best wishes, and bids me ask 'what is the fashionable colour for mantles in Paris,' and also 'what is become of that "wandering creature, Lafontaine,"' if you should happen to recollect such a personage."

"P.S.—My daughter insists on our setting out from Brighton to-morrow and crossing the Channel the day after. She has a whim for revisiting Switzerland, and in the mean time begs that if, during our absence, *you* should have a whim for sea air and solitude, you may make of the villa any use you please.—Yours sincerely."

After reading this strange and broken letter, I was almost glad that I had not seen Mariamne. Lafontaine was in her heart still, in spite of absence. At this I did not wonder, for the heart of woman, when once struck, is almost incapable of change: but the suspense was killing her; and I had no doubt that her loss would sink even her strong-headed parent to the grave.

But the letter contained nothing of the one name for which my first glance had looked over every line with breathless anxiety. There was not a syllable of Clotilde! The father's cares had absorbed all other thoughts; and the letter was to me a blank in that knowledge for which I panted as the hart pants for the fountains. Still I was not dead to the calls of friendship; and that night's mail carried a long epistle to Mordecai, detailing my escapes and the services of his kindred in France, and, for Mariamne's ear, all that I could conceive cheering in my hopes of that "wandering creature, Lafontaine."

But I was now forced to think of sterner subjects. I had arrived in England at a time of the most extraordinary public excitement. Every man felt that some great trial of England and of Europe was at hand, though none could distinctly define either its nature or its cause. France, which had then begun to pour out her furious declamations against this country, was of course generally looked to as the quarter from which the storm was to come; but the higher minds evidently contemplated hazards nearer home. Affiliated societies, corresponding clubs, and all the revolutionary apparatus, from whose crush and clamour I had so lately emerged, met the ear and the eye on all occasions; and the fiery ferocity of French rebellion was nearly rivalled by the grave insolence of English "Rights of Man." But I am not about to write the history of a national fever. London was round me,—rich and beggared, splendid and sullen, busy and idle London. I was floating on those waves of human being in which the struggler must make for the shore, or sink. I was in the centre of that huge whispering gallery where every sound of earth was echoed and re-echoed with new power, and where it was impossible to dream. My days too were spent in communication with government, and a large portion of my

nights was employed in carrying on those correspondences which, though seldom known in the routine of Downing-street, formed the essential part of its intercourse with the continental cabinets.

But a period of the deepest suspense remained. Parliament had been summoned for the 13th of December. Nearly to the last moment the cabinet had been kept in uncertainty as to the actual intent of France. There had been declamation in abundance in the French legislature and the journals; but, with this unsubstantial evidence, the cabinet could not meet the country. Couriers had been sent in all directions, boats were stationed along the coast to bring the first intelligence of actual hostilities, every conceivable expedient was adopted, but all in vain. The day of opening the session was now within twenty-four hours. At length, after lingering in expectancy of the arrival of despatches from our ambassador at the Hague, I offered to cross the sea in the first fishing-boat which I could find, and ascertain the facts. My offer was accepted; and in the twilight of a winter's morning, and in the midst of a snow-storm, I was making my shivering way homeward through the wretched lanes which, dark as pitch and narrow as footpaths, then led to the centre of the diplomatic world, when, in my haste, I nearly overset a meagre figure which, half blinded by the storm, was tottering towards the Foreign-office. After a growl, in the most angry jargon, the man recognized me; he was the clerk whom I had seen at Mordecai's house. He had but an hour before received, by one of the private couriers of the firm, a letter, with orders to deliver it with all expedition. He put it into my hand: it was from Elnathan, and was simply in these words:—"My kinsman and your friend has desired me to forward to you the earliest intelligence of hostilities. I send you a copy of the bulletin which will be issued at noon this day. It is yet unknown; but I have it from a source on which you may perfectly rely. Of this make what use you think advantageous.—Your well-wisher."

With what pangs the great money-trafficker must have consigned to my use a piece of intelligence which must have been a mine of wealth to the man who carried it first to the Stock Exchange, I could easily conjecture.

But I saw in it the powerful pressure of Mordecai, which none of his tribe seemed to have the means of resisting. Sending one of the attendants to arouse the chief clerk, I stood waiting his arrival with the bulletin unopened in my hands. But the official had gone to his house in the country, and might not return for some hours. My perplexity increased. Every moment might supersede the value of my intelligence. At length a twinkling light through the chinks of one of the dilapidated doors told me that there was some one within from whom I might at least ask when and how ministers were to be approached. I knocked, the door was opened, and, to my surprise, I found that the occupant of the chamber was one of the most influential members of administration. The fire had sunk to embers, the lamp was dull, and the hearer was half frozen and half asleep. But no sooner had he cast his eyes upon my mysterious despatch than all his faculties were in full activity.

"This," said he, "is the most important paper that has reached this country since the taking of the Bastille. THE SCHELDT IS OPENED! This act involves an attack on Holland; the defence of our ally is a matter of treaty, and we must arm without delay. The war is begun, but where it shall end"—he paused and fixed his eyes above, with a solemnity of expression which I scarcely expected to find in the hard-lined countenance—"or who shall live to see its close, who can tell? We have been waiting," added he, "for this intelligence from week to week, with the fullest expectation that it would come; and yet, when it has come, it strikes one like a thunder-clap. This is the third night that I have sat at this table unable to go to rest. You see, sir, that our life is, at least, not the bed of roses for which the world is so apt to give us credit. It is like the life of my own hills—the higher the sheeling the rougher the blast."

I still honour the memory of this remarkable man. He was a Scot, and with all the best characteristics of his country. I had heard him in Parliament, where he was the most powerful second of the most powerful minister that England had seen. But if all men were inferior to the premier in majesty and fulness of conception, the man

to whom I now listened had no superior in readiness of retort or aptness of illustration—in that mixture of sport and satire, of easy jest and subtle sarcasm, which forms the happiest talent for the general uses of debate. If Pitt moved like the armed man of chivalry, or rather like the main body of the battle—for never was man more entitled to the appellation of a "host in himself"—never were front, flanks, and rear of the host covered by a more quick-witted and indefatigable auxiliary. He was a man of family, and brought with him into public life not the manners of a menial of office, but the bearing of a gentleman.

He was perfectly familiar with the great question of the time, and saw the bearings of my news at once. "This paper," said he, "announces the fact that a French squadron has actually sailed up the Scheldt to attack Antwerp. Yet it is not ten years since France protested against the same act by Austria as a violation of the rights of Holland. The new aggression, is, therefore, not a solitary violence, but a systematic fraud; not merely the breach of an individual treaty, but a declaration that no treaty is henceforth to be held binding;—it is more than an act of rapine; it is a universal dissolution of the principles by which society is held together. In what times are we about to live?"

He now turned the conversation to myself; spoke with more than official civility of my services, and peculiarly of the immediate one; and asked in what branch of diplomacy I desired advancement.

My answer was prompt. "In none. I desired promotion but in one way—the army." I then briefly stated the accidental loss of my original appointment, and received, before I left the chamber, a note for the Secretary-at-War, recommending me in the strongest terms for a commission in the Guards.

The world was now before me, and the world in the most vivid, various, and dazzling shape, in the boldest development of grandeur, terror, and wild vicissitude which it exhibited for a thousand years—ENGLAND WAS AT WAR!

But the war of England was a war of the people—a war of wrath and indignation—a war of civilized society, intrusted to a single championship—a great effort of human nature to discharge, in the shape of blood, a disease which

was sapping the vitals of Europe; or, in a still higher and therefore a more faithful conception, the gathering of a tempest which, after sweeping France in its fury, was to restore the exhausted soil and blasted vegetation of society throughout the Continent, and in whose wildest hour England, serene and undismayed, was to

"Ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm."

I shall acknowledge that I looked upon the coming conflict with mingled alarm and rejoicing. For the latter feeling, perhaps I ought to make some apology; but I was young, ardent, and ambitious. My place in life was unfixed, standing in that unhappy middle position in which stands a man of birth too high to suffer his adoption of the humbler means of existence, and yet of resources too inadequate to sustain him without bold and indefatigable exertion.

In thoughts like those, rash and unconnected as they were, I spent many a restless day and still more restless night. I often sprang from a pillow which, if I had lived in the days of witchcraft, I should have thought spelled to refuse me sleep, and, walking for hours about my chamber, endeavoured to reduce into shape the speculations which filled my mind with splendours and catastrophes worthy of oriental dreams. Yet why did I not then pursue the career in which I had begun the world? Why not devote myself to diplomacy? For this I had two reasons. The first—and, let me confess, the most imperious—was, that my pride had been deeply hurt by the loss of my commission. I felt that I had not only been deprived of a noble profession, accidental as was the loss, but that I had subjected myself to the trivial yet stinging remarks which never fail to find an obnoxious cause for every failure. While this cloud hung over me, I was determined *never* to return to my father's house. Good-natured as the friends of my family might be, I was fully aware of the style in which misfortune is treated in the idleness of country life; and the Honourable Mr. Marston's loss of his rank in his Majesty's Guards, or his preference of a more pacific promotion, was too tempting a topic to lose any of its stimulants in the popular ignorance of the true transaction.

My next reason was, that my mind was harassed and

wearied by disappointment until I should not have regretted to terminate the struggle in the first field of battle. The only woman whom I loved, and whom, with the usual frenzy of passion, I solemnly believed to be the only woman on earth deserving to be so loved, had vanished from my most anxious inquiry. The only woman whom I regarded as a friend was in another country, probably dying. If I could have returned to Mortimer Castle—which I had already determined to be impossible—I should have found only a callous, perhaps a contemptuous, head of the family, angry at my return to burden him. Even Vincent—my old and kind-hearted friend Vincent—had been a soldier; and though I was sure of never receiving a reproach from his wise and gentle lips, was I equally sure that I could escape the flash or the sorrow of his eye?

Taking my lonely dinner in a tavern of the suburbs, the waiter handed me a newspaper which he had rescued for my behoof from the hands of a group eager, as all the world then was, for French intelligence. My eye rambled into the "fashionable column;" and the first paragraph, headed "Marriage in High Life," announced that on the morrow were to be solemnized "the nuptials of Clotilde, Countess de Tourville, with the Marquis de Montrecour, colonel of the French Mousquetaires," &c. The paper dropped from my hands. I rushed out of the house; and, scarcely knowing where I went, I hurried on until I found myself out of the sight or sound of mortal.

The night was utter darkness; there was no lamp near; the wind roared; and it was only by the flash of the foam that I discovered the broad sheet of water before me. I had strayed into Hyde Park, and was on the bank of the Serpentine. With what ease might I not there finish all! Life was a burden, thought was a torment, the light of day a loathing. But the paroxysm soon gave way. Impressions of the duty of human nature, made in earlier years, revived within me with a singular freshness and force. Tears gushed from my eyes, fast and flowing; and, with a long-forgotten prayer for patience, I turned from the place of temptation.

As I reached the streets once more, I heard the trumpets of the Life Guards and the band of a battalion returning to

their quarters. They had been lining the streets for the king's procession to open the sitting of Parliament. This was the 13th of December—the memorable day to which every heart in Europe was more or less vibrating, yet which I had totally forgotten. What is man but an electrical machine after all? The sound and sight of soldiership restored me. The machine required only to be touched to shoot out its latent sparks; and, with a new spirit and a new determination kindling through every fibre, I hastened to be present at that high debate which was to be the judgment of nations.

My official intercourse with ministers had given me some privileges, and I obtained a seat under the gallery, that part of the House of Commons which is occasionally allotted to strangers of a certain rank. The house was crowded, and every countenance was marked with solemn anxiety. Grey, Sheridan, and other distinguished names of party, had already taken their seats; but the great heads of government and opposition were still absent. At length a buzz among the crowd who filled the floor, and the name of Fox repeated in every tone of congratulation, announced the pre-eminent orator of England. I now saw Fox for the first time, and I was instantly struck with the singular similitude of all that I saw of him to all that I had conceived from his character and his style. In the broad bold forehead it could not be difficult to discover the strong sense—in the relaxed mouth, the self-indulgent and reckless enjoyment—in the quick, small eye under those magnificent black brows, the man of sagacity, of sarcasm, and of humour—and in the grand contour of a countenance and head which might have been sculptured to take its place among the sages and sovereigns of antiquity, the living proof of those extraordinary powers which could have been checked in their ascent to the highest elevation of public life only by prejudices and passions not less extraordinary. As he advanced up the House, he recognized nearly every one on both sides, and spoke or smiled to them all. The business of the night was not yet begun; the Speaker was occupied with some matters of routine; and Fox stopped several times on his way, and was surrounded by a circle with whom, as I might judge from their laughter, he ex-

changed some pleasantry of the hour. When at length he arrived at the seat reserved for him, he threw himself upon it with the easy look of a man who had reached home, gave a nod to Windham, held out a finger to Grey, warmly shook hands with Sheridan, and then, opening his well-known blue and buff costume, threw himself back on the bench, and laughingly gasped for air.

But another movement of the crowd at the bar announced another arrival; and Pitt entered the House. His look and movement were equally characteristic with those of his great rival. He looked to neither the right nor the left; replied to the salutations of his friends by the slightest possible bow; neither spoke nor smiled; but, advancing with a measured step and remarkably erect figure, took his seat in total silence. The Speaker now read the king's speech, and, calling on "Mr. Pitt," the minister rose. I have for that rising but one description—the one which filled my mind at the moment, from the noblest poet of the world—

> "Deep on his front engraven,
> Deliberation sat, and public care.
> Sage he stood,
> With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest monarchies. His look
> Drew audience and attention, still as night,
> Or summer's noontide air."

CHAPTER XXVI.

I HAD been familiar with the debates of the French Convention, and had witnessed French eloquence in its highest exertions. I had listened to some of their public speakers with strong interest, but it was only while they were confined to detail. No man tells a story better than a French *conteur*. There lies the natural talent of the people. Nothing can be happier than their seizure of slight circumstances, of the passing colours of events, and of those transient thoughts which make a story as pretty as a piece of ladies' embroidery—a tasteful display of trivial difficulties gracefully surmounted. But even in their ablest speakers I could perceive a constant dissatisfaction with themselves, unless they happened to produce

some of those startling conceptions which roused their auditory to a stare, a start, or a clapping of hands. I had seen even Mirabeau, with all his conscious talent, look round in despair for applause; if some lucky epigram did not come to his rescue, he was undone.

I was now to be the spectator of a different scene. Here too were passion and resentment, the keenness of rivalry and the ardour of triumph; but here was no affectation. Men spoke as men speak when their essential interests are engaged—plainly, boldly, and directly—vigorously often, sometimes vehemently, but with that general, strong reality which administers eloquence to even the most untaught orders of mankind.

Pitt took the lead in all senses of the phrase. On this night he was magnificent. His exposition of the state of Europe, though perfectly unadorned, had yet an effect upon the House, not unlike that of opening a volume to a multitude who had but just learned to read. All was novelty, conviction, and amazement. His appeal to the principles by which a great people should shape its conduct had all the freshness and all the strength of feelings drawn, at the moment, from the depths of his own noble bosom; while his hopes of the victory of England over the temptations to public overthrow exhibited all the fire, and almost all the sacred conviction, of prophecy.

He described the system of France as "subversion on principle," its purpose "universal tumult, its instrument remorseless bloodshed, and its triumph a general reduction of society to the wild fury and squalid necessities of the savage state. This," he exclaimed, turning his full front to the House, and raising his hand with the solemnity of an adjuration—"this we *must* resist, in the name of that Omnipotent Disposer who has given us hearts to feel the blessings of society, or we must acknowledge ourselves unworthy to hold a name among nations. This we must resist—live or die. This anarchy we must meet by order—subtlety by sincerity—intrigue by resolution—treachery by good faith—menace by courage. We must remember that we have been made trustees of the honour of the past, and of the hopes of the future. A great country like ours has no alternative but to join the enemy of all justice,

or to protect all justice; to league against all government, or to stand forth its indefatigable and invincible champion. This is the moment for our decision. Empires are not afforded time for delay. All great questions are simple. Shrink, and you are undone, and Europe is undone along with you; be firm, and you will have saved the world!"

The feelings with which this lofty language was heard were intense. The House listened, in a state of solemn emotion, hour after hour,—deeply silent but when some chord was so powerfully touched that it gave a universal thrill. Again those involuntary bursts of admiration were as suddenly hushed by the eagerness of the House to listen, and the awful importance of the subject. It was not until the great minister sat down that the true feeling was truly exhibited; the applause was then unbounded—a succession of thunders.

I had now leisure to glance at the opposition. Fox, for a while, seemed good-humouredly inclined to give up the honour of the reply to some of the popular speakers round him; but the occasion was too grave to be intrusted to inferior powers, and, on a general call for his name, he rather reluctantly rose. The world is too familiar with the renown of this celebrated man to permit me more than a sketch of his style.

Of all the public speakers whom I have ever heard, Fox appeared to me the most subtle—of course, not in the crafty and degrading sense of the word, but in the art of approaching his case; there he was masterly and matchless. He loitered, he lingered, he almost trifled by the way, until the observer began to believe that he had either no object in view, or had forgotten it altogether. In the next moment he rushed to the assault, and carried all by storm. On this occasion he had a difficult part to play; for the hourly horrors of the French capital had begun to alienate the aristocracy of England, and had even raised disgust among that most influential body, the middle class. The skill with which the orator glided over this portion of his subject was admirable; no Camilla ever "flew o'er the unbending corn" with a lighter foot. He could not altogether evade the topic. But he treated it as one might treat the narrative of a distressing casualty, or a disease,

only to be touched on by man with the pity due to human infirmity, or even with the respect due to a dispensation from above. He often paused, seemed at a loss for words, of which, however, he never failed to find the most pungent, and assumed, in a remarkable degree, the appearance of speaking only from strong compulsion, a feeling of reluctant duty, a sense of moral necessity. I here observed his incomparable management; but it was when he had made his way through this difficult performance that I followed him with unequivocal delight. He had been hitherto Milton's lion, "pawing to get free his hinder parts." He was now let loose in all his symmetry and power, like the lion with the forest and the plain before him. "Why has the monarchy of France fallen?" he exclaimed. "Because, like those on whom the malediction of Scripture has been pronounced, it had eyes, yet would not see, and ears, yet would not hear. A new, ardent, and irresistible population was growing up round it year by year, yet it could see nothing beyond its own worn-out circle of nobles, priests, and princes. In making this war," said he, "you are beginning a contest of which no man can calculate the means, no man can state the objects, and no man can foresee the end. You are not warring alone against the throne of France, nor even against the people of France, but you are warring against every people of the earth which desires to advance its own prosperity, to invigorate its own constitution, or to place itself in that condition of peace, purity, and freedom, which is not more the desire of man than it is the command of Providence."

To the charge of defending the French mob, his answer was in the most prompt and daring style. "Who are the French mob? The French nation. Dare you put eight-and-twenty millions of men into your bill of attainder? No indictment ever drawn by the hand of man is broad enough for it. Impeach a nation, and you impeach the Providence that made it. Impeach a nation, and you are impeaching only your own rashness and presumption. You are impeaching even the unhappy monarch whom you profess to defend. Man everywhere is the creature of circumstances. Nations are only what their governments make them. But France is in a state of revolt. Be it so.

I demand, what nation ever revolted against justice, truth, and honour? You might as well tell me that they rebelled against the light of heaven; that they rejected the fruits of the earth; that they refused to breathe the air. Men do not war against their natural benefactors; they are not mad enough to repel the very instincts of preservation. I pronounce fearlessly that no nation ever rose, or ever will rise, against a sincere, rational, and benevolent authority. No nation was ever born blind. Infatuation is not a law of human nature. The monarchy of France was the criminal." This was sophistry, but it was skilfully suited to the time.

Another burst, which produced vast effect on the House, referred to the exclusiveness of the chief public employments. He now became more daring still, and yet more sophistical, closing with a boldness of figure unusual even to himself. "I contend that this was a victory gained not for a populace, but for a people, for all France, for twenty-eight millions of men, over a portion of society who had lost their rank,—a body already sentenced by their personal inefficiency,—a caste who, like a famished garrison, had been starved by the sterility of the spot in which they had enclosed themselves, or, like the Indian devotees, had turned themselves into cripples by their pretence of a sacred superiority to the habits of the rest of mankind."

Opposition still exhibited its ranks but slightly diminished, and the chief passages of this impassioned appeal, which continued for three hours, were received with all the fervour of party. Burke then rose. Strong interest was directed to him, not merely from his eminent name, but from the public curiosity to hear his explanation of that estrangement which had been for some time spreading, under his auspices, through the leading personages of the opposition. Like most men who have made themselves familiar with the works of a great writer, I had formed a portraiture of him by anticipation. I never was more disappointed. Instead of the expressive countenance and commanding figure which I had imagined to enshrine the soul of the most splendid of all orators, I saw a form of the middle size and of a homely appearance, a heavy physiognomy, and the whole finished by two appurtenances which would have been fatal to the divinity of the Apollo

Belvedere,—spectacles and a wig. His voice and manner were scarcely less prepossessing; the one was as abrupt and clamorous as the other was rustic and ungraceful. He had the general look of a farmer of the better order, and seemed, at best, made to figure on a grand jury.

But I soon felt how trivial are externals in comparison with genuine ability, or, perhaps, how much even their repulsiveness may add to the power of genius. I had listened but a few minutes when I forgot everything except that a man of the highest faculties was before me, with those faculties wrought to the highest tension by their subject. Taking a wholly new line of argument, he dwelt as little on the political views of England with Pitt as he did upon the revolutionary regeneration of France with Fox. His view was exclusively English. "I do not charge," he exclaimed, turning full on the opposition bench, "individuals with conspiracy, but I charge them with giving the sanction of their name to principles which have in them all the germs of conspiracy. Sir, the maxim of resisting the beginnings of evil is as sound in the concerns of nations as in the morality of individual minds. Nay, I am not sure whether mischief is not more effectually done in that incipient state than when the evil comes full-formed. It is less perceived, and it thus destroys with impunity. The locust, before it gets its wings, destroys the crop with a still more rapacious tooth than when its armies are loading the wind."

After illustrating his principle with vast variety of allusion, he touched, in a gentler tone, on the schism of his party. "Honourable members have talked largely of their zeal for the constitution. Sir, I am content to follow the wisdom which judges of the faith by the works. In my humble measure I have been a zealous worshipper of the constitution. There was a time when those honourable gentlemen and myself—and I speak of that time with the regret due to long friendship—took 'sweet counsel together,' and bowed before that common worship as friends. That time is past. We have since taken different paths. I have been charged with apostasy. But what is my apostasy? That I have not followed the frenzy and ingratitude of the hour; that, while the most awful event in the his-

tory of human change has been transacting before us, I have not shut my ears and eyes to its moral; that I have not followed the throng into the valley, and there joined the fabricators of the new idolatry, the priesthood of the golden calf of revolution—nay, shared the polluted feast and the intoxicated dance, while the thunders of divine vengeance were rolling on the mount above."

It was obvious from his manner, and his frequent return to the topic, that the charge of desertion had deeply wounded his generous and sensitive nature; and nothing struck me as more characteristic of his faculties than the unexhausted amplification of defence which seemed to pour into his mind at every return. But I hasten on.

"In those ranks," said he, "I fought for nearly the half of that portion of life allotted to man—certainly for that portion of my course in which the vigour and the applicability of all the best parts of human nature have their fullest play. I came to it a volunteer; I fought side by side with its foremost; I shared the 'winter of their discontent' as willingly as the summer of their prosperity; I took the buffets of ill fortune, and they were many, with as cheerful a countenance and as unshaken a fidelity as any man. But, when I saw a new banner raised among them, blazoned with mottoes of evil, and refused to follow, who were the deserters? They or I?" As he spoke these words he drew his otherwise rather stooping form to its full height, lifted his hand above his head, and stood like one at once demanding and defying the investigation of the empire.

The roar of applause which followed seemed to shake the very walls. He was powerfully moved; his countenance changed from its usual pallidness to deep suffusion; and his hands rather tossed than waved in the air. At last I saw one of them thrust strongly into his bosom, as if the gesture was excited by some powerful recollection. "Do I speak without proof of the public hazards?" he exclaimed. "I can give you demonstration—I need invoke neither powers above nor powers below to enlighten you. I have the oracle within my hand." The House fixed all its eyes upon him. He dropped his voice, and spoke with a faint but clear tone, which formed a remarkable contrast to his usually bold and even harsh enunciation:—"Sir,"

said he in this half-whispered voice, "before I join these gentlemen in their worship, I must know what deity presides in their temple; I must see that the incense which fumes before its altar is taken from the sacred repositories of the constitution, not the smuggled importation of foreign revolt—that pernicious compound of civil mischief and mad metaphysics—which, instead of consummating and purifying the sacrifice, only poisons the air. I must see something of the *hierarch* too before I join in his aspirations; I must see that he is lawfully inducted into his office, that he is not a rebel in the garb of loyalty—a blasphemer where he professes to pray—a traitor where he propounds allegiance."

Fox here, evidently taking the description to himself, exhibited palpable signs of displeasure. Burke caught the expression at once, and instantly changed the whole current of his conceptions. "If," said he, "the honourable gentleman thinks that I designate *him* as the high-priest of this new worship, he does me as much injustice as himself. No, no! When we shall see the Republican Pantheon thrown open, he, and such as he, will not be called to officiate at the altar. He is much more likely to be the victim. The popular ornaments, now flung so lavishly upon him, will more probably be but the decorations for his sacrifice. The chaplet will but bind him to the horns of that abhorred altar which reeks with so much of the best blood of France." Here a corpulent noble, peculiarly hostile to Burke, laughed contemptuously. The orator instantly turned upon him. "True," said he, "there may be a good deal of variety in that procession. There may be the mummer as well as the priest; we may see the mountebank selling his potions, and playing his tricks, as well as the sacrificer with his axe, unless the ambition of the bloated performer should prefer to combine the offices, and be at once the butcher and the buffoon."

The hit was felt on all sides, and the laughter was unbounded. He then rose, as was his custom, into a higher strain. "I can imagine that procession," said he, "or rather that triumph of the principles of change. Like the return of the classical Bacchus from his Indian conquests, the triumpher," and he now cast a look at Fox, "secure of

his supremacy, exulting in his prowess, and thinking the civilized world at his feet, but not without the companionship of his trusty Silenus"—and here again he turned his glance on the noble lord—"that veteran follower, whose ambition is limited to his cups, and the vigour of whose fidelity is shown only in the constancy of his intoxication; the whole procession being drawn by the wild lords of the forest and the wilderness, who, harnessed as they may be for the moment, will no sooner find their food stinted than they will resume the natural instincts of the lion and the tiger, turn on their drivers, and devour them." A universal cheer accompanied the words.

"But, sir," he exclaimed, turning to the chair, "we have higher topics to think of, and to those I now call the attention of the representatives of England. I have alluded to the revolutionary temple. I here have its deity." With those words he plucked from his bosom a large dagger, held it for a moment up to the light, and then flung it at the foot of the table. The astonishment, and even the alarm, of the whole assembly was beyond description. They started from their seats, as if assassination had stood before them in a visible shape. Some crowded round Burke, some caught at the dagger, which was eventually carried to the Speaker, and became the object of universal curiosity. All was confusion for a considerable time. At length Burke, in a few words delivered in his most impressive tone, explained the phenomenon. "That dagger," said he, "is one of thousands, perhaps of millions, which the preachers of the new philosophy are now forging for popular conviction. You see that by its construction it is equally fitted for the head of a pike or for a dagger—equally serviceable for tearing down a monarchy in the field or stabbing its friends in their chambers. You have it, the emblem at once of rebellion and assassination. Those are the arguments of the new school, those are the instruments by which the limbs of the state are to be amputated, for replacement by the inventions of the revolutionary mechanists. Those are the keys by which the locks of cabinets and councils are henceforth to be opened, and the secrets of national wealth laid bare to the rapacity of the rabble. You now know the quarter from which your dangers are to come. I deprecate

foreign hostility, but I dread civil blood. War may even be essential to shake society from its stagnation; but all human nature abhors the assassin who sits beside us, and, under the mask of brotherhood, strikes his weapon to the heart."

The debate had been prolonged through the greater part of the night, and yet such was the interest felt in its subject that the streets in the neighbourhood continued full to the last. All the hotels and coffee-houses were filled with people waiting for the division. Groups, with lighted torches, were lingering everywhere, and passing the intelligence along as members happened casually to make their appearance in the course of the night. Shouts and expressions of wrath alternately arose, according to the nature of the intelligence; and a species of open-air legislature was held, during one of the bitterest nights of winter, with discussions as active, though perhaps not altogether so classic, as those within. Public curiosity was roused to its wildest height; every public sentiment had its full expression; and whether the acclamation was louder when, at the breaking-up of the House, Fox's corpulent frame was seen toiling its slow way through the pressure, or when Pitt's slender figure and passionless face were recognized, might have perplexed the keenest investigators of popular feeling.

On returning to my chamber, exhausted, yet animated with a new sense of the value of existence in such a country, and of the noble faculties which she carried in her bosom, I saw a large packet on my table. I gazed on its envelope for a few moments, with that strange emotion which sometimes makes us dread to open the very letter which we most desire to receive. It was obviously from Downing-street. At last, and tremblingly, I opened it. It contained my commission in the Guards!

My destiny was now fixed, and it is impossible to tell how much I felt relieved. I had spent the preceding period in such perplexing indecision that I felt my heart withering within me. But all was now clear. My course was decided. After again and again reading this simple but expressive document, I threw myself on my bed, and attempted to forget it and the world. But I could forget neither; my eyelids would not close; sleep had gone from me. After a useless effort for composure I rose, relighted

my lamp, and spent the rest of the night in writing to my relatives—to Vincent, to Mordecai, and every one to whom I felt his Majesty's sign-manual a vindication of my whole career.

Yet it may be justly supposed that, during the interval of my equipment, I did not limit my feelings to this lonely abstraction. I spent an anxious period in making inquiries for the Maréchale, in every quarter which offered the slightest probability of discovering her abode. Though I had seen the announcement of Clotilde's approaching marriage in the public journals, I had seen no mention of its having taken place. But my search was wholly unproductive. The captivating duchess, who received me with the kindness which seemed a part of her nature, while she joined in the general admiration of the "young, the lovely, and the accomplished Comtesse," "her dearest of friends," could tell me nothing more than that she had left London with the intention of visiting France. There her knowledge ceased. I learned only further that she had grown singularly fond of solitude, was melancholy, and had no hesitation in expressing the deepest dislike to the marriage proposed by her family. My inquiry was at an end.

Hopeless as this intelligence was, it relieved me from the certainty which would have been despair. While Clotilde remained unallied to one whom I could not avoid regarding as an uncongenial spirit, there was at least the chance of happiness remaining for me. If there should be a war my regiment would be among the first to be employed, and France would inevitably be the first object of a British expedition. The "march to Paris" had been proclaimed by orators, exhibited in theatres, and chaunted in street ballads. I was young, ardent, and active. My family name was one known to the table at which I seated myself on my introduction to the Guards, and I was immediately on the best footing with the gallant young men of a corps which has never suffered a stain. I had even some peculiar sources of favour in their eyes. I had actually made a campaign.

The discipline of the British army was not then, what it has since been, among the most effective in Europe. It was not then the "grenadier army." There was no pecu-

liarly strong reason for the minute toil of foreign discipline in an army which had never been engaged since the American war. But other days were now obviously at hand, and the passion for discipline, and above all others for the Prussian discipline, became universal. I was soon offered the adjutancy, and I accepted it rejoicingly.

In those days, by a curious anomaly which can scarcely be believed in ours, every regiment was practically free to choose its own system of manœuvre. The natural consequence was, that no two regiments executed any one movement alike. Thus to brigade the army was impossible, and every field-day was a scene of ludicrous confusion. But the Prussian discipline, which has since been made the basis of the British, was then perfectly new, and it had all the effect of a brilliant novelty. Our parade was constantly crowded with officers of the highest grades, anxious to transmit its practice to their regiments. The king, always attached to German recollections, and who would have made as good a soldier as any of his forefathers, was frequently a spectator; and the regiment, thus stimulated, rapidly displayed all the completeness and precision of movement which to this day makes a review of the Guards the finest military spectacle in Europe.

The adjutant was not forgotten in the general applause. I was promised promotion in the most gratifying language of royalty itself, and all the glittering prospects of the most glittering of all pursuits opened before me. I still had my moments of depression. Clotilde often rose before me, like a departed spirit, in the solitude of my chamber. I mentally saw her in the midst of those sumptuous balls and banquets which the nobility gave in such profusion at this period.

But I had in no period of my life been suffered to linger long in melancholy. One night, on returning from a dinner at H—— House, I found a gentleman in possession of my chamber, with my fire briskly blazing, supper on the table, and every appearance of his having made himself master of the establishment. As I paused at the door in some surprise at the ease of the proceeding, the intruder turned round, and I saw the face of my old and excellent friend Vincent. I was delighted to take the honest hand of

one who was enough to redeem the character of human nature. He was full of congratulations and country news. He told me that this, his first visit to London for years, was simply to shake hands with his pupil, to hear from him his adventures, and to have the opportunity of seeing his regiment on parade. He had, on that day, enjoyed all his objects together. He had visited our parade. The regiment "reminded him of the grenadiers of Maria Theresa in the first Hungarian campaign; and all that he wished for me was that I had seen Daun or Laudohn."

But he had more important topics. By an accidental meeting with an old college friend, high in office, he had ascertained that an expedition to Holland was resolved on, and that it was to take place without delay. "Williamstadt was bombarded, and must fall in a few days if not relieved. With its fall the Seven Provinces would be thrown open. In this emergency aid had been solicited from England. An envoy had just arrived soliciting immediate succours."

Vincent's country news was brief. My lordly brother was in pursuit of a neighbouring heiress, and, as a prospective remedy for matrimonial *ennui*, was also speculating on the chance of employment on some foreign embassy.

War was proclaimed. The French advance into the territories of our old and very helpless ally awoke England at once. The perfectly fruitless negotiations by which the slide from disgust into war is generally managed had produced their effect; and France furious for its prey, and England indignant at the French bulletins, for the first time were to be brought face to face. The Guards were ordered for embarkation. We received the order in the spirit of a jubilee. All had been prepared. And, on the day before our final parade, I received my appointment to a company.

That parade, next morning, was one which I believe was never forgotten by any individual who had the good fortune to witness it. Of all the striking ceremonials which I have ever seen, it was the most striking. The king had given notice of his intention to be present and bid us farewell. At six o'clock the three regiments were drawn up in front

of the Horse Guards, a body of three thousand men, and finer-looking troops never bore arms. All the avenues to the park were crowded with the multitude. Exactly at the appointed half-hour, a rush of the people towards the parade showed that the king, always punctual, was at hand. He came, surrounded by general officers—with the Prince of Wales, then a most chivalric figure, in the uniform of his regiment of light dragoons, and the Duke of York as a field-marshal. The enthusiasm of the troops could not be restrained as this brilliant staff approached their line; and three cheers were given with all the zeal of honest loyalty. There are times when tears are the only substitute for speech, and the king, one of the most kind-hearted of men, was visibly affected at this reception. The multitude caught the feeling; the shouts subsided, and all was weeping and waving of handkerchiefs.

The king put an end to this embarrassing sympathy. He rode forward, and, taking his station in the centre of the parade, gave the word to "march." He was answered by one gallant huzza from the line, repeated by the thousands and tens of thousands who now moved before and around us. Our bands struck up, and with the monarch and his sons at our head, and the queen and princesses following in their equipages, we marched through streets crowded to the roof, echoing with acclamations, and wishing us all good fortune as we passed along, until we left the mighty metropolis behind.

The embarkation took place within a few hours; and on that night we slept on the element which Britain has so long made her field of battle. The weather was serene, and we fully enjoyed the freshness of the air and the brightness of the view as we rounded the coast. At the mouth of the Thames we met a strong squadron of the line of battle appointed for our convoy, and bringing numerous transports with troops. Our fleet had now become extensive, and as we moved out from the land the sight became continually more animated and exciting.

I stood gazing from the poop of our transport the entire day: and even when evening came, it was but a change of interest and beauty. We sailed proudly along—a moving multitude—a fragment of a mighty nation—almost a nation

ourselves, on the face of the deep. Within the horizon which now lay beneath my glance smooth as glass, and shining in the richness of the departing day, what materials of living power were gathered!—what bold hearts! what high hopes! what indefatigable perseverance! what accomplished intelligence! A force inferior to the one before me had more than once changed the fate of the world. The cause, too, was a noble one. It had no taint of cruelty or crime to degrade the soldiership of England. We were acting in the character which had already exalted her name as protector of the weak and punisher of the powerful—the great champion of justice, truth, and right, throughout the world.

CHAPTER XXVII.

On the second evening we had left the green hills and white cliffs behind, and saw the long level of the coast of Holland. But, if the coast was repellent, nothing could exceed the eagerness of the inhabitants to welcome our arrival. On our first approach to the land, every boat that could swim came off, crowded with people, some to take refuge on board the fleet, but thousands to urge our speedy landing.

The man-of-war boats were instantly cheering round us, and my regiment had the honour to be the first on shore. War is of all things the most picturesque, and there never was a gala on the waters of the Adriatic more gay or glittering than the landing. But we had infinitely the advantage in our numbers, in the gallantry, and, what gave a higher feeling to the whole, in the reality of all our objects. The ships were that British fleet whose name was synonymous with the mightiest exploits of war, and which it would have been well worth going round the globe to see.

On this night we bivouacked; for the shore offered no human habitation, and it was too late for the landing of our tents. But the sand was dry; our fires were soon lighted; all was sport and activity; our bands played "Welcome to Holland;" our men danced with the peasantry; all had the look of a magnificent frolic; and, when at last I threw

myself on my open-air pillow, I dreamed of the "march to Paris."

At daybreak we moved in advance, in the highest spirits, and only longing to have an opportunity of trying our strength with the enemy. From time to time the sound of a cannonade reached us, and heightened our eagerness. But Holland is proverbially difficult for any movements but those of a trackschuyt; and the endless succession of narrow roads, the perpetual canals, and the monotony of her level fields, rich as they were, exhausted us more than the distance. But the spell of human hearts is excitement, and war is all excitement.

On the second evening of our march through this landscape of fatness, we were warned of our approach to the besieged fortress by the louder roar of the cannon, and not less by the general desolation of the country. The enemy's hussars had made a wide sweep, and wherever they were seen the villagers had fled instantly, carrying off their cattle.

At length we halted for the evening, and orders were issued for a general movement at daybreak to attack the French force covering the siege of Williamstadt. The order was received with shouts, and the night was spent in high exultation. The cannonade, which was now within a few miles of us, continued with such violence during the night that sleep was next to impossible; and long before the first streak of light in the east we were busy in the numberless preparations for a first action. Orderlies and aides-de-camp were speedily in motion, and at the first tap of the *reveillé* all were on parade. The sun rose brightly, gave one broad blaze along our columns, and, after thus cheering us, instantly plunged into a mist, which, except that it was not actually black, obscured our road nearly as much as if it had been midnight. This was simply a specimen of the new land on which we now set foot. But it perplexed all the higher powers prodigiously, generals and the staff galloping round us in all directions, the whole one mass of confusion. Yet we still pushed on, toiling our puzzled way, when, as if by magic, a regiment of the enemy's hussars suddenly dashed full into the flank of our column.

Never was there a more complete surprise. The enemy

were as much astonished as ourselves, for the collision had been the result of an attempt to find their way through the fog back to their camp; but I now for the first time saw the temper of John Bull in the field. The attack of the hussars was evidently looked on by our men less as a military movement than as a piece of foreign impudence. To fire might be hazardous to some of our advancing columns, which we could hear, though not see; but the word "charge" from our gallant old colonel was enough: they rushed with the bayonet on the cavalry, forced their way in between the squadrons, which had been brought to a stand by the narrowness of the dyke. Escape was impossible, and in a few minutes the whole laid down their arms, gave up their horses to our fifers and drummers, and were marched to the rear.

As if to reward us for this dashing affair, a gust of wind blew aside the fog; the sun gleamed again; and Williamstadt, the French camp, the covering force formed in columns and waiting for us, and the whole country to the horizon, green as a duck-pond and nearly as smooth, burst on our view. Our advance was now rapid. The difficulty of the ground, intersected with high narrow causeways stretching over marshy fields, retarded our progress; and for two hours—and they were the longest two hours which any of us had ever spent—we were forced to content ourselves with firing at our long range, and watching the progress of our more distant columns moving on the flank of the enemy.

At length we received the order to advance, and drive in a strong column which had just debouched from a wood in front of us. Our men rushed on with a cheer, threw in a heavy volley, and charged. Their weight was irresistible, and the French column broke and took refuge again in the wood. Another glance showed me the whole British force in motion. All was exultation. We had met the enemy and driven him from his position.

But the most difficult task of the day was still to be achieved. The camp of the French had been placed in strong ground; heavy batteries commanded every approach; and Dampierre, their general, an officer of known ability, had exhibited all his skill in rendering the position, if not impregnable, at least one which could not be forced without the most serious loss. The day was already far spent, and the

troops were wearied with six hours' marching and fighting; but nothing could restrain their eagerness to finish the victory. The heads of columns again advanced, and the firing became tremendous on both sides. The French batteries poured an absolute shower of balls upon us, and we were beginning to lose men, when a strange and indescribable sound suddenly caught every ear. Such was the universal sense of something more singular, and even more formidable, than the work of war, that the fire on both sides rapidly subsided, and every eye was turned to look for the cause. It soon exhibited itself. With a roar like thunder, we saw the sea bursting in upon the plain where the enemy lay entrenched. The Dutch garrison had sallied out from Williamstadt, on the repulse of the French, and cut the dyke in several places.

The ocean now fought the battle; each chasm in the long mound which protected the fields from inundation was the channel of a roaring cataract; the trenches were soon filled; as the waters advanced the field-works were washed away; wave still rolled on wave; cannon, tents, baggage, everything but the soldier himself, was seen gradually sinking, or floating away on the surface of the surge. Within the hour the ground on which we had fought during the day was completely covered with the flood. The French camp was totally buried. The enemy had only time to make a hurried retreat, or rather flight, along the causeways which stood above the waters. As an army they were utterly ruined; when they at last reached firm ground, they scattered through the country, and those battalions never appeared in the field again.

Our troops entered the relieved fortress with drums beating and colours flying.

The catastrophe was complete; and when, at night, I broke away from the heat and noise of the huge barrack in which we had been placed as the post of favour, and walked upon the rampart, nothing could form a more expressive contrast to the tumult of the day. The moon was high, and her light showed the whole extent of the late field of battle. But all was now one immense shining lake.

I was still gazing from the ramparts when I observed a body of cavalry advancing along the dyke at a rapid pace,

with a group of staff officers among them. The alarm was given by the sentries, and after some brief pause it was ascertained that they were the escort of the new commander-in-chief of the allied armies in the Netherlands. My first impression was, that the man to whom so important a trust was given must be Clarifait, and I hastened down to meet him at our quarters. But I was disappointed; and for the dark and decided physiognomy and military frankness of that distinguished soldier, I saw the Prince Cobourg, stern and lofty in his air, evidently too Austrian to be popular, yet known to be a gallant officer. But my disappointment was considerably assuaged by seeing one of his staff throw himself off his horse, and hasten towards me with almost joyous salutation. My surprise and pleasure were equal when I found him to be Guiscard.

Supper was on the table when I introduced the Prussian philosopher to my brother officers; and they were delighted with him. But he was the philosopher no longer, or rather had thrown off the half misanthropy which had made him so strong a contrast to my honest friend Vornhorst. His very countenance had adopted a different expression. It was no longer stern and sarcastic, but was lighted up with pleasantry; and the only conception of the change which I could form was, either that he had arrived at that height of philosophy to which everything seems trivial, or that he had met with some of those extraordinary instances of good fortune which throw all the world into sunshine for the moment.

"We have now," said he, "the finest army in line that Europe has ever seen; little less than 200,000 men are under the command of the prince. If he is suffered to move them in a mass, they must break through any part of the French territory which they choose. If they divide, they will be beaten. It will now take only three pitched battles to reach Paris, for the three covering armies fight with the guillotine in their rear. But a single unlucky skirmish may bring every peasant in France upon us; and it takes but fifteen days to make the French peasant a soldier. Blows, and those straightforward, are our true policy. If we negotiate, we shall be beaten; if beaten here, we shall be beaten on the Rhine, and perhaps even on the Danube."

"But will Cobourg follow up *his* blow?" was the question on all sides.

"The commander-in-chief," was the answer, "is intelligent and brave. He has learned his profession under the greatest soldier whom Russia has ever produced, or perhaps ever will produce—Suwarrow. But he himself is under orders. If he were a republican general he would instantly march, and within a week he would be in the Tuileries. But, as an Austrian commander, he must wait for the opinion of men—too far off to know a single fact of the campaign; too blind to see it, if they were on the spot; and too jealous even of their own general to suffer him to beat the enemy, if victory would throw their nothingness into the shade."

Every hour now produced its event. A general *fou-de-joie* announced the first success of the campaign on the Rhine; Mayence had been taken with its garrison of 20,000 men. The French general, Custine, had made an unsuccessful attack on the lines of the besiegers, to relieve the fortress in its last extremity, but had been beaten and driven back into the Vosges, where he was at liberty to starve among the most barren mountains of France. But this intelligence came qualified by the formidable rumour that Prussia was already making terms with the French, that it had acknowledged the government as the "Republic," and even that the Prussians had sung the *Marseillaise*. Thus we had the light and shade.

But while politicians tremble soldiers are gay. What were all those shiftings and doublings to us? We had all the luxuries of the most luxurious of all lives, the foreign camp. We had now marched beyond the region of fogs and bogs, and were moving through the richest soil, and not the least beautiful landscape, of the Continent. Holland was left behind, Flanders was round us, France was before us. We had the finest army in Europe, untouched by disaster, confident in its strength, and with the enemy in full flight.

I enjoyed the scene doubly, for I had been sent, along with a squadron of dragoons, to the advanced posts, and thus escaped the turmoil of the camp. My quarters were in one of the old Flemish country-houses, which had been

the head-quarters of the French general, and thus been preserved from the usual ravage. The chateau was large, well furnished in the national fashion, and the half-dozen domestics who remained after the flight of their master were charmed with the expenditure which always follows the presence of English troops. My companion, the captain of dragoons, was one of the gallant specimens of his country—the heir of a noble family, generous and gay, brave as his own sword, and knowing as little of the soldier's life as became a young aristocrat with the prospect of thirty thousand a year. He insisted on our giving a ball to the Flemings, and our invitations were sent out accordingly for half a dozen leagues round. They included, of course, the camp; and every lounger who could obtain leave for the night came crowding in upon our ball.

Nothing could succeed better. All was festivity within doors. But not so all without, for the night suddenly changed from serenity to storm. England is not the only spot famed for fickleness of atmosphere. By midnight every beech and elm round the chateau was tossing and bending down to the roots, and a heavy snowfall was already sheeting the fields. As the storm rose it occurred to me to ascertain what provision might have been made against it by our soldiers, who were lodged in the barns and extensive outhouses of the chateau. Leaving my dragoon friend to act as master of the ceremonies, I sallied forth.

The storm was now at its height, and it was with some difficulty that I could make my way. In the midst of the excessive darkness I felt some animal make a sudden spring on me, which nearly brought me to the ground. Wolves were not common in the country, but there had been some recent instances of their issuing from the forest, and my first idea was that I had been thus attacked. But I soon recognized in my companion the huge house-dog of the chateau, with whom I had already struck up a particular friendship. More sharpsighted than myself, he had rushed across the wood after me, and exhibited all imaginable rejoicing at the rencontre. I reached the barns, found all my men wrapped in that quiet which cares

nothing for the troubles of kings and cabinet councils, and was preparing to return, when Cæsar, with every demonstration of having found something of importance, brought me a letter which he had just dug out of the snow. By the light of the lantern I discovered it to be the report of a French officer, informing his general of our intended ball, and proposing a plan for carrying off the whole party together. I was thunderstruck. The letter was dated three days before, and, though evidently dropped by some negligence, yet giving full time for the writer to make his report in person, and bring the force necessary for our capture. If it succeeded, an exploit of this order might have paralyzed the whole campaign; for nearly the entire staff of the army, besides a crowd of regimental officers of all grades, were within the walls of the chateau.

I hastened back, showed the report to one or two of the general officers, in private, for the purpose of avoiding alarm to our fair partners; and we then considered what means were left to protect us from the approaching catastrophe. To send the ladies away was impossible, in a tempest which already flooded every road, and with all the trees crashing over their heads. To expect reinforcements from the camp, at such a distance, and in such weather, was hopeless, with the recollection, too, that the whole affair might be over in the next quarter of an hour, and our entire assembly be in march before the French hussars.

This was the first occasion of my responsibility as a soldier; and I learned, from this time forth, to give commanders-in-chief some credit for their responsibilities. The agonies of that half-hour I have never forgotten. Military failure was nothing compared with the universal shame and blighting which must fall on the officer who suffered such a disgrace to be inflicted on him in the presence of the whole army. My resolution was desperately, but decidedly taken—if the post fell into the enemy's hands, on that night to throw away my sword and abandon my profession, unless some French bayonet or bullet relieved me from all the anxieties of this feverish world. To propose the command of the post to any of the superior officers present was, as I well knew, contrary to rule; and

on me and the dragoon, consequently, devolved the whole duty.

The service of outposts was a branch of soldiership, at that period, wholly unpractised by the British troops; but I had seen it already, on its most perfect scale, in the Prussian retreat. My first step now was to warn my soldiers and the dragoons of the probability of attack, and my second to call for a favourite quadrille, in which I saw all our guests busily engaged before I left the chateau. I now proceeded to repeat my Prussian lesson in reconnoitring the avenues to the house. This, which ought to have been our first act on taking possession, had been neglected, in the common belief that the enemy were in full retreat. The gallant captain of dragoons proposed to take a gallop at the head of a party along the *chaussée*, and ascertain whether there were any symptoms of movement along the road. He mounted, and was gone. Posting the remaining dragoons in the farm-yard, I went to the front to make such preparations as the time might allow for the enemy.

Like the greater number of the Flemish chateaux, the house was approached by a long avenue lined with stately trees; but it wanted the customary canal, or the fosse, which, however detestable as an accompaniment to the grounds in peace, makes a tolerable protection in times of war, at least from marauding parties. All was broad and open, except where the garden walls and hedges of the lawn shut it in. As the avenue was the only approach accessible to cavalry, and as this was the force which would probably be used for a *coup de main*, if it were to be attempted at all, I set all hands at work to secure it. Wild as the night was, my men wielded the spade and mattock with good will; and we had completed a trench of some feet deep and wide, half across the road, when I caught the trampling of cavalry at a distance. My chagrin was irrepressible;—the enemy would be upon us before we had got through our work, and we must be taken or fly. My men worked vigorously; but the cavalry were upon us—and, to my utter astonishment and infinite relief, our labours produced a roar of laughter. The party were our own dragoons, who had looked for the French advance in

vain, and were now amusing themselves with our waste of toil. We forgave them their jest; they passed, and we prepared to follow to our quarters.

Still the French officer's report haunted me; the precision of its terms, and the feasibility of the enterprise itself, struck me with new force; and, even after I had given the word to move, I halted the men, and, climbing a little pleasure-turret by the side of the avenue, gave a parting glance round the horizon. But nothing was to be seen. The night was as dark as a dungeon, and I prepared to descend, when, at the moment, the distant sound of a trumpet broke on the air! I listened, and thought that I recognized the French call for cavalry to "saddle and mount." I sprang down; every man piled his arms, took spade and mattock in hand once more, and in a few minutes the trench was completed across the road. Still no further notice of approaching troops was to be heard; and I heard a low, but rather provoking, laugh spread among my company. Yet I determined to persevere, and, ordering some of the trees round us to be cut down, formed a rude species of *chevaux de frise* in front of our trench. It was scarcely finished when the distant trampling of cavalry was heard in the lull of the gale. All were now convinced; and, despatching a notice to the dragoons to be ready, we stood to our arms. Giving the strictest orders that not a word should be spoken or a shot fired, I waited for the enemy. The trampling now increased every moment; and it was evident that the body of cavalry must be large, though of its actual numbers we could form no conjecture. They suddenly stopped at the entrance of the avenue, and I was in fear that my *trou de rat* would be discovered; but the national impatience soon spared me this vexation. The cavalry, hearing nothing in the shape of resistance, and not relishing the pelting of the storm in the open country, rushed in without further search, and came pouring on at the gallop. The avenue was long, and the whole corps was already within it, when the leading squadrons came at full speed upon my rude fortification. In they dashed, into the very heart of my *chevaux de frise*. Nothing could equal the confusion. Some sprang over the trees, but it was only to be flung into the trench; some even

leaped the trench, but it was only to be met by our bayonets. The greater number, startled by the cries of their unlucky comrades in front, attempted to rein back, but found it impossible, from the weight of the squadrons still pushing on from behind. At this point, while they stood, a struggling mass, wholly unable to move either backward or forward, I gave the word to fire, and poured in a volley with terrible execution. An ineffectual firing of pistols was the only return. Some of their officers now rushed to the front, with the usual gallantry of their character, called on their men to advance, and charged the trench; but this dash only filled it with falling men and horses. I gave them a second volley, which was followed by a howl of despair; the whole of their leading squadron was brought down—every shot had told. The mass still stood, evidently taken by surprise, and wholly unable to extricate themselves. I now ordered our dragoons to mount, take a circuit to the head of the avenue, and, if possible, close them in. While we continued our fire, I heard the effect of my order in the shout of a charge at the further end of the avenue.

The staff and other officers in the chateau had already hurried out at the sound of the firing: some had come up to us, and others had joined the dragoons. A proposal was now sent by a general officer to the commandant of the enemy to surrender, with the threat of being put to the sword in case of an instant's delay. The brave Frenchman was indignant at the proposal, and threatened to hang the bearer of it on the next tree. But the British camp had by this time been alarmed. Bugles and trumpets were heard in every direction. Our dragoons had already shut up the avenue; and after some slight discussion, the advance of a few squadrons more, which came up at the gallop, proved the total impossibility of escape, and the affair was at an end. This night's *mêlée* had no rival in the campaign; it put into our hands twelve hundred of the best cavalry in the French army, and almost wholly stripped the enemy of the means of protecting his flanks; while it made a most brilliant figure in the Gazette —the true triumph of the British soldier.

To me it was a restoration to life from the depths of

despair. It may be perfectly true that many a post has been surprised, and many an officer captured, without being objects of penalty, or even of public observation; but my case was different. My character as a soldier was essential to my existence. The eyes of many, at home and abroad, were on me; and the scorn of one being, wherever she was, would have been fatal to me. But of those bitter extremes I say no more; my spirit was buoyant with a sense that I had done my duty in the most effective style. Nor was I left to my solitary sense on the subject. My return to the chateau was as triumphant as if I had gained a pitched battle at the head of a hundred thousand men. Our fair guests, who had spent the hour before in the terrors of immediate capture, were boundless in their congratulations and expressions of gratitude. The officers, to whom my defence had made the whole difference between a French prison and liberty, spoke in the manliest and most cheering terms of my conduct. The scene of the struggle was visited during the next day by every officer of the army who could obtain a horse and an hour's leave; and the report which was forwarded to the commander-in-chief contained language which was regarded as a sure pledge of promotion.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GUISCARD hurried over to join in the congratulation. He had been employed until a late hour in sending despatches to his court relative to the growing problems of our politics with Prussia; and taking the first opportunity of throwing aside the envoy, he came at speed to shake hands with me. His impatience to see the ground scarcely suffered him to sit down at table; his toast "to the brave British army" was given, and we went out to traverse the avenue. After having inspected every corner of it with his keen military glance, "You will find my theory right," said he; "war is always a succession of mistakes. There never was a battle fought in which even the successful general could not point out a series of his own blunders, any one of which might have ruined him. The only distinction is, that there

are brilliant mistakes and stupid ones. Yours was of the former order, the Frenchman's of the latter."

To my laughing reply, "that there was, at least, some merit in the steadiness of the men who beat him"—"Of course," was his answer. "The English steadiness is like the English fire, the grand cure for the English contempt of the tactician. Yours is an army of forlorn hopes; you are made for assaults: but it must be owned that your troops of old managed that part of their business well, and I dare say that the art is not lost among you yet. Still there are other matters to be thought of. Pray," said he, turning his keen eye on me, "can any one in the chateau tell me how near us the French are to-night?" I acknowledged my ignorance. "I ask the question," said he, "because I think it by no means impossible that they are at this moment marching down upon you. Not that they can afford to lose a brigade of cavalry a night, and I therefore think you safe enough for the twelve hours to come; but I am far from answering for the next twenty-four. Dampierre commands them; I know him well—he is a bold and also a clever fellow; and the loss of his cavalry last night will leave him no alternative but to attack you or to meet the guillotine."

I shuddered at this fate of brave men overcome only by circumstances, and asked whether it was possible that such a system could last, or in any case could be endured by men with swords in their hands.

"It can, and will," was the reply. "Soldiers are the simplest race of mankind when they come in contact with the cunning men of cities. An army, showy and even successful as it may be, is always an instrument and no more—a terrible instrument, I grant you, but as much in the hands of the civilian as one of your howitzers is in the hands of the men who load and fire it. At this moment sixty commissioners, ruffians and cut-throats to a man—fellows whom the true soldier abhors, and who are covered with blood from top to toe—are on their way from Paris to the head-quarters of the fourteen armies of the Republic. Woe be to the general who has a will of his own!"

"But Frenchmen are human beings after all. Must not those horrors revolt human nature?" was my question, pr-

with indignant sincerity. He looked at me with a quiet smile.

"You are romantic, Marston, but you are of an age that becomes romance. When you shall have lived as long in the world as I have done, and seen as much of the world as I have seen, you will know that it is utterly selfish. But now to more pressing affairs than my honest and luckless philosophy. Get leave from your colonel to take a ride with me. I feel a sudden wish to know what Dampierre is doing; and a few hours, and as few leagues, may supply us with information on points which your brave countrymen seem so constitutionally to despise. But recollect that *I* am a Prussian."

We returned to the table, which was crowded with visitors, and spent an hour or two in great enjoyment; for what enjoyment can be higher than the conversation of minds willing to give and receive intellectual pleasure? And Guiscard was never more animated, easy, and abundant, in communicating that pleasure. He was a model of the most accomplished order of the continental gentleman. He had commenced life as a scholar; a disappointment in his affections drove him into the army. He discovered that he was made for the profession; and combining the accomplished diplomatist with the almost chivalric soldier, he had rapidly risen to the highest rank of the royal staff. But he had the still rarer qualities of a sincere heart, and was a firm and willing friend.

The orderly now returned with the leave for which I had applied. The post was left in charge of the captain of dragoons; and Guiscard and I, without mentioning our purpose, rode out quietly, as if to enjoy the cool of the evening. It was well worth enjoying.

All was peace, and the few peasants whom we met as the night fell all told the same tale, that there had been no patrols in their neighbourhood of late, and that, with the exception of the attack on the "outposts of the English," they had not heard or seen anything of the French for a month before.

The night had now fallen, and though calm it was one of remarkable darkness. We passed village after village, but by this time all were asleep, and, except the disturb-

ance of the house-dogs as we rode by, not a sound was to be heard.

"I agree with you," my companion observed, "that Dampierre is clearly not on this road; but that is no reason why he may not be on some other. On considering the matter, I think that we have been wrong in looking for him here; for his national adroitness is much more likely to have tried a movement in any other direction. He may now be marching on either the right or the left of the spot where we are standing; and if he is the officer that I believe him to be, he is trying that game at this moment."

"What then is to be done but ride back to our quarters, unless we should prefer being cut off by his advance?" was my question.

"One thing is to be done," was the reply; "we must not let ourselves be laughed at; and if we return with nothing more for our night's work than the story that we slept in a Flemish barn, we shall be laughed at."

We now agreed to separate, and examine the country to the right and left, for an hour precisely, meeting at one of the villages in the road, if no advance of the enemy were discernible within that time. We parted, and I commenced as comfortless an expedition as it would be easy to imagine.

I was on the point of returning, when I observed a sudden light rising above some farmhouses about half a league off. The light rapidly increased, and I rode forward, in some degree guided by its illumination. But, after blazing fiercely for a while, it sank as suddenly as it rose; and I was again left bewildered among hedges and ditches. But a loud hum of voices, followed by the sound of many footsteps, now convinced me that a large body of men were near, though whether peasants roused by the fire, or battalions, I was still unable to discover. While I stood under cover of a clump of trees by the road-side, the question was settled by the march of a patrol of cavalry, followed at brief intervals by squadrons and light troops intermixed. It was evident that Dampierre meditated a surprise of the British forces, and that the whole of his skirmishers were already in motion. How long this movement had continued, or how near the enemy might already have approached to the

British camp, was entirely beyond my conjecture; and, for the first few moments, the probability of the surprise, and the possibility of my being already so completely within the range of the French march as to preclude my bearing the intelligence in sufficient time, made the drops of anxiety and perturbation roll down my forehead. But everything must be tried. I no longer attempted to wind my way back through the network of lanes, but, in the spirit of an English sportsman, took the country in a straight line towards the British quarters. My horse, a thorough-bred English hunter, evidently preferred *leaping* the Flemish fences to wading his way through the swamps; and I had the honour of bringing the first information, and the happiness of finding that I had brought it just in the right time.

The camp was immediately under arms; every preparation was made, with a silence which gave me a high conception of the capabilities of the British soldier for every species of service; and, without a sound among ten thousand men, we waited for the approach of the enemy.

Dampierre's manœuvre had been a dashing one, conceived and managed with the skill of an able officer. His purpose had been to throw his main body into the rear of our position, and, while he drew off our attention by a false attack on our front, avail himself of the confusion of a night attack to crush us. Whether the fighting qualities of the Englishman would not have made him repent of his plan under any circumstances is no longer the question, but the surprise was now wholly his own. The first volley which we poured into his columns, as they crept up stealthily towards our line, was so heavy that it finished the battle. By the blaze of the musketry we could see the French masses actually rolling back upon each other, staggering and shaken like landsmen at sea, or like walls in an earthquake. Our cavalry were now ordered to follow; but the enemy were too quick in making their escape, and the intersected nature of the country forbade any continued pursuit. A few shots from our howitzers, which ripped up the ground after them, were all that we could send as our parting present; and the engagement, which began in such silence

and sternness, finished in roars of laughter from all our battalions.

Day broke, and the order was issued to follow the French general. The troops, animated by the prospect of coming to action at last, and utterly wearied with the idleness of the camp, received the intelligence with shouts; and the whole moved rapidly forward. Dampierre, before the march of the previous night, had provided for casualty by forming an entrenched camp in the famous position of Famars. It was strong by nature, and he had added to its strength by covering it with field-works and a powerful artillery. It was late in the day before we came within sight of it; and its strength, from the height of its glacis —the natural glacis made by a succession of sloping hills —was all displayed to full and formidable advantage.

The troops, fatigued with the length of the march under the burning sun of one of the hottest days that I ever felt, were now halted at the foot of the heights; and the plans of attack proposed were various enough to have perplexed the Aulic council itself. Lines of circumvallation, bombardment, and waiting the effects of famine, were successively urged. But the British style prevailed at last over the scientific. The Guards were ordered to head the column which was to storm the lines in front, while columns on the right and left were put in motion at the same instant. We rushed forward under a general discharge of the French artillery and musketry, and in a quarter of an hour the position was in our hands. The difficulty of its approach, and the broken nature of the ground in its rear, still enabled the French general to make his retreat with the chief part of his forces. But our prize was well worth the trouble; for we brought back two thousand prisoners and the whole artillery in position.

The war had now begun in earnest, and our advance was unintermitted. On the eighth day from the storm of Famars, we again came in sight of Dampierre. He was now the assailant; our army, which had never exceeded ten thousand men (such was the military parsimony of those days), with the Prussian troops, and some of the smaller German contingents, were now unwisely spread to cover a line of nearly thirty miles. The French general

had seized the opportunity of retaliating his ill fortune upon the allied troops. At daybreak we were roused by the tidings that the French had broken through our weak extended line in several places, and had got into the rear of the whole army. The force of the enemy, its direction, and its object, were alike matters of total ignorance; and for some hours it was impossible to obtain any exact information.

I had every reason to believe that my excellent friend Guiscard had either fallen into the hands of the enemy, or had been killed on the night when we separated. His horse had been found straying through the country; his helmet had been also found, with the fragment of a sabre, in a spot evidently much trampled, and which therefore appeared to be the scene of the personal rencontre in which he had probably fallen. Everything had been found but his body.

At length the firing, which had continued with more or less steadiness during the day, approached our position, and we were ordered to advance. The country was now a portion of an ancient forest, and it was difficult to see in front of us beyond a few hundred yards. As we made way we could hear not only the musketry, but the shouting of the troops engaged, as, growing constantly more impatient, we pressed on. At length an officer came galloping towards us. Judge of my astonishment and delight when I saw Guiscard. As he reined up beside me—

"I have not a moment," said he, "to speak to you; you shall hear of my adventures by-and-by. I was in as much fear for you as you probably were for me. But now tell me where I am to look for the officer in command of the column."

The general was soon found, and Guiscard communicated to him that the enemy had concentrated his chief force directly in front of us, where a Prussian column was posted; that the Prussians had vigorously resisted several successive atracks; but that the force converging on it was too powerful, and that it must speedily retire. "Then let it retire," was the general's reply, "and we shall take its place."

"Pardon me, general," was the prompt suggestion of

the pupil of a more experienced school; "but, if you will permit me, I shall ride back to my countrymen, inform them of your advance, and make them hold their position until you come out from the forest upon the enemy's flank."

His opinion was received, and he put spurs to his horse and was gone. We now moved with all speed to the right of our former direction, and, after half an hour's toiling through the intricacies of a wood on which no axe seemed to have fallen since the deluge, passed round the enemy, and came full upon their rear. A few volleys, thrown in upon them in this state of alarm, broke them. The Prussian fire in front, and ours in the rear, made their disorder irreparable. In this crisis Dampierre rushed forward, with a group of aides-de-camp, to restore the engagement, striking the fugitives with his sabre, and desperately exposing his person to the balls which now fell thick as hail around him. For a while he seemed to bear a charmed life; but a rifleman of the Prussian hulans took a sure aim. He fired, and I saw the unfortunate general fall from his horse. He died instantly,—a more gallant death, though scarcely a more expeditious one, than awaited the unsuccessful generals of the merciless Republic. We buried him on the spot where he fell, with the honours due to a distinguished soldier. Before nightfall the French had retired in all quarters; and the remnant of their troops hurried across the Flemish frontier, utterly disheartened and ruined.

This engagement, which was known long after as the battle of the forest of Vicogne, cleared the Netherlands, raised the fame of the British troops to the highest pitch, and left in their hands four thousand prisoners.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EUROPE had never seen so complete or so powerful an army as that which was now assembled within sight of Valenciennes. The city was already regarded as in our possession; and crowds of military strangers, from every part of the Continent, came day by day pouring into the

allied camp. Nothing could equal the admiration excited by the British troops. The admirable strength, stature, and discipline of the men, and the successes which they had already obtained, made them the first object of universal interest; and the parades of our regiments formed a daily levée of princes and nobles. It was impossible that soldiership could be on a more stately scale.

At length orders were issued to prepare for action, and the staff of the army were busily employed in examining the ground. The Guards were ordered to cover the operations of the pioneers; and all was soon in readiness for the night on which the first trench was to be opened. A siege is always the most difficult labour of an army, and there is none which more perplexes a general. To the troops it is incessant toil, to the general continual anxiety. We had already swept all before us; we had learned the language of victory; we were in the midst of a country abounding with all the good things of life, and which, though far from exhibiting the luxuriant beauty of the British plains, was yet rich and various enough to please the eye. Our camp was one vast scene of gaiety.

But the course of victory is like the course of love, which, the poet says, "never does run smooth." The successes of the allies had been too rapid for their cabinets; and we had found ourselves on the frontiers of France before the guardian genii of Europe, in the shape of the stiff-skirted and antiquated privy councillors of Vienna and Berlin, had made up their minds as to our disposal of the prize. Startling words suddenly began to make their appearance in the despatches, and "indemnity for the past and security for the future"—those luckless phrases, which were yet destined to form so large a portion of senatorial eloquence, and give birth to so prolific an offspring of European ridicule—figured in diplomacy for the first time; while our pioneers stood pickaxe in hand, waiting the order to break ground.

We thus lost day after day. Couriers were busy while soldiers were yawning themselves to death, and the only war carried on was in the discontents of the military councils. Who was to have Valenciennes?—whose flag was to be hoisted on Lille?—whose army was to garrison

Condé?—became national questions. Who was to cut the favourite slices of France? employed all the gossips of the camp, in imitation of the graver gossips of the cabinet; and, in the mean time, we were saved the trouble of the division by a furious decree from the Convention ordering every man in France to take up arms, converting all the churches into arsenals, anathematizing the German princes as so many brute beasts, and recommending to their German subjects the grand republican remedy of the guillotine for all the disorders of their governments, past, present, and to come.

Circumstances seldom give an infantry officer more than a view of the movements in front of his regiment; but my intimacy with Guiscard allowed me better opportunities. Among his variety of attainments he was a first-rate engineer, and he was thus constantly employed where anything connected with the higher departments of the staff required his science. He was now attached to the Prussian mission, which moved with the head-quarters of the British force; and our intercourse was continued. I thus joined the reconnoitring parties under his command, and received the most important lessons in my new art. But one of my first questions to him had been the mode of his escape on the night of our volunteer reconnaissance.

"Escape? Why, I committed the very blunder against which I had cautioned you, and fell into the hands of the first hussar patrol that I could possibly have met. But my story is of the briefest kind. I had not ridden forward half an hour when my horse stumbled over something in that most barbaric of highways, and lamed himself. I, however, attempted to make my way across the country in your direction. To accomplish this object I turned my horse loose, taking it for granted that, lame as he was, he was too good a Prussian to go anywhere but to his own camp. This accounts for his being found at morn. I had, however, scarcely thus taken the chance of losing a charger which had cost me a hundred and fifty gold ducats, when I received a shot from behind a thicket, which disabled my left arm, and I was instantly surrounded by a dozen French hussars. I was foolish enough to be angry, and angry enough to fight. But as I was neither Samson

nor they Philistines, my sabre was soon beaten down; and I had only to surrender. I was next mounted on the croup of one of their horses, and after a gallop reached the French advanced guard. My first apprehension, however, was for you. I thought that you must have been entangled in the route of some of the advancing battalions; and I inquired of the colonel of the first to whom I was brought whether he had taken any prisoners. 'Plenty,' was the answer of the rough republican—'chiefly peasants and spies; but we have shot none of them yet. That would make too much noise; so we have sent them to the rear, where I shall send you. You will not be shot till we return to-morrow morning after having cut up those *chiens Anglais*.'"

"Is it possible that any soldier could have avowed so atrocious an act—a cruelty so utterly barbarian?" was my exclamation.

"Perfectly," was the reply. "The Frenchman was merely acting by the letter of the republican law. The last decree of the Republic condemns all prisoners that belong to Britain or her allies to death. So I had only to wait my chance. I was sent to the rear with a couple of hussars to watch me until the arrival of the general, who was coming up with the main body. On foot and disarmed, I had only to follow them to the next house, which was luckily one of the little Flemish inns. My hussars found a jar of brandy, and got drunk in a moment; one dropped on the floor, the other fell asleep on his horse. I had now a chance of escape. As I took my last view of my keeper outside, nodding on his horse's neck, I glanced on a huge haystack in the stable-yard. The thought struck me that, helpless as I was, I might contrive to give an alarm to some of the British vedettes or patrols, if your gallant countrymen should condescend to employ such things. I stole down into the yard, lantern in hand, thrust it into the stack, and had the satisfaction of seeing it burst into a blaze. I made my next step into the stable, to find a horse; but the French had been before me, and those clever fellows seldom leave anything to be gleaned after them. What became of my escort I did not return to inquire; but I heard a prodigious galloping through the village

and found the advantage of the flame in guiding me through as perplexing a maze of thicket and morass as I ever attempted at midnight. The sound of the engagement which followed directed me to the camp; and I remain, a living example to my friend of the advantage of twelve hours between sentence and execution."

I had another wonder for him; and nothing could exceed his gratification when he heard that his act had enabled me to give the alarm. But for that blaze I should certainly not have been aware of the movement; the light alone had led me into the track of the enemy, and given me time to make the intelligence useful.

During this little narrative we had been riding over the bleak downs which render the environs of Valenciennes such a contrast to the general luxuriance of Northern France, and were examining the approaches to the city when Guiscard called to his attendant for his telescope. We were now in the great coal-field of France; but the miners had fled, and left the plain doubly desolate. "Can those," said he, "be the miners returning to their homes? for, if not, I am afraid that we shall have speedy evidence of the hazards of inactivity." But the twilight was now deepening, and neither of us could discern anything beyond an immense mass of men, in grey cloaks, hurrying towards the city.

I proposed that we should ride forward and ascertain the facts. He checked my rein. "No! Amadis de Gaul, or Rolando, or by whatever name more heroic your chivalry prefers being called, we must volunteer no further. My valet shall return to the camp and bring us any intelligence which is to be found there, while we proceed on our survey of the ground for our batteries."

We had gone but a few hundred yards, and I was busily employed in sketching the profile of the citadel, when we heard the advance of a large party of British cavalry, with several of the staff, and the Duke of York, then a remarkably handsome young man, at their head. I had seen the duke frequently on our parades in England; but even the brief campaign had bronzed his cheek, and given him the military air which it requires a foreign campaign to give. He communicated the sufficiently interesting intelligence

that since the victory over Dampierre the enemy had collected a strong force from their garrisons, and, after throwing ten thousand men into Valenciennes, had formed an entrenched camp, which was hourly receiving reinforcements. "But we must put a stop to that," said the duke with a smile; "and, to save them trouble and ourselves time, we shall attack them to-morrow." He then addressed himself to Guiscard, with the attention due to his name and rank, and conversed for a few minutes on the point of attack for the next day, examined my sketch, said some flattering words on its correctness, and galloped off.

We rode to the various points from which a view of the newly-arrived multitude could be obtained. Their fires began to blaze, and we were thus enabled at once to ascertain their position, and in some degree their numbers. There could not be fewer than thirty thousand men, the arrival of the last few hours. "For this *contretemps*," said Guiscard, as he examined their bivouac with his telescope, "we have to thank only ourselves. Valenciennes ought to have been stormed within the first five minutes after we could have cut down those poplars for scaling ladders," and he pointed to the tapering tops of the large plantations lining the banks of the Scheldt; "but we have been quarrelling over our portfolios while the French have been gathering every platoon within a hundred miles; and now we shall have a desperate struggle to force those lines, and probably a long siege as a finale to the operation. There, take my glass, and judge for yourself."

I looked, and if the novelty and singularity could have made me forget the serious business of the scene, I might have been amply amused. The whole French force were employed in preparing for the bivouac, and fortifying the ground, which they had evidently taken up with the object of covering the city. All was in motion. At the distance from which we surveyed it, the whole position seemed one huge ant-hill. Torches, thickets burning, and the fires of the bivouac, threw an uncertain and gloomy glare over portions of the view, which, leaving the rest in utter darkness, gave an ominous and ghostly look to the entire. I remarked this impression to Guiscard, and observed that it was strange to see a "scene of the most stirring life so sepulchral."

"Have you ever been in the Sistine chapel?" asked my companion.

"No! Italy has been hitherto beyond my flight; but the longing to see it haunts me."

"Well, then, when your good fortune leads you to Rome, let your first look be given to that noblest work of the pencil, and of Michael Angelo; glance at the bottom of his immortal picture, and you will see precisely the same wild activity and the same strange animation. The difference only is, that the actors here are men, there fiends; here the scene is the field of future battle, there the region of final torment. I am not sure that the difference is much after all."

At daybreak the British line was under arms. The colour of the national uniform is the most showy and soldierlike in Europe. But the complete equipment of our troops, and the strength of our battalions lately reinforced from home, were in themselves a promise of victory. Yet there were feelings still higher in that display than the mere pomp of soldiership. On the success or failure of the columns, which now waited only the word to move, might depend the weightiest interests of mankind. Our war was what no other war had been since the old invasions under the Edwards and Henrys—national; it was as romantic as the crusades. Our troops, too, had all the ardour which is added even to the boldest by the assurance of victory. They had never come into contact with the enemy but to defeat them; and the conviction of their invincibility was so powerful that it required the utmost efforts of their officers to prevent their rushing into profitless peril. The past and the present were triumphant; while, to many a mind of the higher cast, the future was perhaps more glittering than either.

Twenty-seven thousand men were appointed for the attack of the French lines; and on the first tap of the drum a general cheer was given from all the columns. The cavalry galloped through the intervals to the front, and batteries of the light guns were now sent forward to take up positions on the few eminences which commanded the plain. But the day had scarcely broke when one of those dense fogs, the customary evil of the country, fell suddenly upon

the whole horizon, and rendered movement almost impossible. Nothing could exceed the vexation of the army at this impediment, and if our soldiers had ever heard of Homer, there would have been many a repetition of his warrior's prayer, that "live or die, it might be in the light of day."

But in the interval important changes were made in the formation of the columns. The French lines had been found of unexpected strength, and the Guards were pushed forward to head a grand division placed in command of General Ferrari. The British were of course under the immediate orders of an officer of their own, and a more gallant one never led troops into fire. I now for the first time saw the general who was afterwards destined to sweep the French out of Egypt, and inflict the first real blow on the military supremacy of France under Napoleon. Abercromby, at this period, was in the full vigour of life; his strongly formed, manly figure, his quiet but keen eye, and a countenance of remarkable steadiness and thought, gave the indications of a mind firm in all the contingencies of war.

Exactly at noon the fog drew up as suddenly as it had descended, and we had a full view of the enemy's army. The French had completed their levies with the characteristic rapidity of their nation, and their force, admirably posted, looked more numerous and formidable than any which had hitherto faced us. It was the covering army, not merely of the fortress, but of the Republic. I gave another glance to our own gallant line. It looked like a living stream of flame. The French were drawn up in columns in front of their camp, to which, by the most extraordinary exertion, they had brought up during the night a numerous artillery, and fortified its circle with powerful redoubts; the guns of the fortress defended their flank and rear, and their position was evidently of the strongest kind.

At length shouts began to arise in distant parts of the field, and we felt that the division which had been appointed to assault the rear of the camp was making progress. Walmoden, commanding a brigade under Ferrari, now galloped up to ascertain whether our men were "ready to assault the entrenchments." "The British troops are *always* ready," was Abercromby's expressive and somewhat indignant an-

swer. At the instant of our moving forward, an aide-de-camp rode up to acquaint the general that the column under the Duke of York had already stormed three redoubts. "Gentlemen," said Abercromby, turning to the colonels round him, "we must try to save our friends further trouble—forward!" In a quarter of an hour we were within the enemy's lines, every battery was stormed or turned, and the French were in confusion. Some hurried towards the fortress, which now began to fire; a large body fled into the open country, and fell into the hands of his Royal Highness; and some, seizing the boats on the river, dropped down with the stream. All was victory; yet this was to be my day of ill fortune.

In pursuing the enemy towards the fortress, a battalion which had attempted to cover the retreat, broke at the moment when my company were on the point of charging them. This was too tempting a chance to be resisted; we pushed on, taking prisoners at every step, until we actually came within sight of the gate by which the fugitives were making their escape into the town. But we were in a trap, and soon felt that we were discovered by a heavy discharge of musketry from the rampart. We had now only to return on our steps, and I had just given the word when the firing was renewed from a bastion round which we were hurrying in the twilight. I felt a sudden shock like that of electricity, which struck me down; I made a struggle to rise on my feet, but my strength wholly failed me, and I lost all recollection.

On my restoration to my senses in a few hours after, I found that I had been carried into the town and placed in the military hospital. My first impulse was to inquire whether any of my brave fellows had shared my misfortune; but all round me were French, wounded in the engagement of the day. I shrink from all recurrence to these scenes. No language can express the depth of wretchedness which once was to be found in every military hospital of Europe. It is a more grateful topic to regard the change which science and humanity have since effected in those places of desolation and despair. It is to the matchless honour of England that she led the way in an achievement so worthy of her generous and benevolent name.

But, besides the sufferings of the wounded, a new species of suffering, scarcely less painful, and still more humiliating, began to be prominent. The provisions of the people, insufficiently laid in at the approach of the besiegers, rapidly failed, and the hospital itself was soon surrounded by supplicants for food. The distress at last became so excessive that it amounted to agony.

As I tossed on my mattress night after night, and heard the roar of the successive batteries, shuddered at the fall of the shells, and was tortured by the cries of the crowd flying from the explosions all night long, I groaned the deepest protest of my spirit against the passion for glory. It is true that nations must defend themselves; the soldier is a protector to the industry, the wealth, and the happiness of the country. I am no disciple of the theory which, disclaiming the first instinct of nature, self-preservation, invites injury by weakness, and creates war by impunity; but the human race ought to outlaw the man who dares to dream of conquest, and deny all renown to him who builds his name in the blood of man.

CHAPTER XXX.

On my capture, one of my first wishes had been to acquaint the regiment with the circumstances of my misfortune, and to relieve my friends of their anxiety for the fate of a brother officer. But this object, which, in the older days of continental campaigning, would have been acceded to with a bow and a compliment by Monseigneur le Comte, or Son Altesse Royale, the governor, was sturdily refused by the colonel in charge of the hospital, a firm republican, and the son of a cobbler, who, swearing by the Goddess of Reason, threatened to hang over the gate the first man who dared to bring him another such proposal. I next sent my application to the commandant, a brave old soldier, who had served in the royal armies, and retained the feelings of better times; but it was probably intercepted, for no answer came. This added deeply to my chagrin. My absence must give rise to conjecture: my fall had probably been

unseen even by my men; and while I believed that my character was above the scandal of either pusillanimity or desertion, it still remained at the mercy of all.

But chance came to my relief. It happened that I had unconsciously won the particular regard of one of the Béguines who attended the hospital; and my *tristesse*, which she termed 'effrayante,' one evening attracted her peculiar notice. Let not my vanity be called in question; for my fair admirer was at least fifty years old, and was about the figure and form of one of her country churns, although her name was Juliet! Pretty as the name was, the Béguine had not an atom of the poetic about her. Romance troubled her not. Yet, with a face like the full moon, and a pile of petticoats which would have made a dowdy of the "Belvedere Diana," she was a capital creature. Juliet, fat as she was, had the natural frolic of a squirrel; she was everywhere, and knew everything, and did everything for everybody; her tongue and her feet were constantly busy; and I scarcely knew which was the better emblem of the perpetual motion. My paleness was peculiarly distressing to her; "it hurt her feelings;" it also hurt her honour, for she had been famous for her nursing, and, as she told me, with her plump hands upon her still plumper hips, and her head thrown back with an air of conscious merit, "she had saved more than even the doctors had killed."

I had some reluctance to tell her the cause of my *tristesse;* for I knew her zeal, and I dreaded her plunging into some hazard with the authorities. But who has ever been able to keep a secret where it was the will of the sex to extort it? Juliet obtained mine before she left the ward for the night, and desired me to give her a letter, which she pledged herself to transmit to my regiment. But this I determined to refuse, and I kept my determination. We parted, half in anger on her side, and with stern resolution on mine.

During the next day Juliet was not forthcoming, and her absence produced what the French call a "lively sensation" —which, in nine instances out of ten, means an intolerable sense of ennui—in the whole establishment. At last her face appeared at the opening of the great door, flushed with

heat and good-nature, and, as it came moving through the crowd which gathered round her with all kinds of inquiries, exhibiting no bad resemblance to the moon seen through a fog; but, whether distinct or dim, hers was full and florid to the last. Her good-humoured visage revived me as if I had met a friend of as many years' standing as she numbered from her cradle. But all my inquiries for the news of earth, outside the hospital, were answered only by an "order" to keep myself tranquil, prevent the discomposure of my pulse, and duly drink my *ptisan*. All this, however, was for the general ear. But when the crowd had gone to such rest as they could find amid the thunder of batteries and the bursting of shells, Juliet approached my pillow, with a broad smile which distended her good-natured mouth from ear to ear, and thrust under my head a small packet—the whole operation being followed by a finger pressed to her lips, and a significant glance to every corner of the huge melancholy hall to see that all was secure. She then left me to my meditations.

The mysterious packet contained three letters; and, eager as I was for their perusal, I almost shuddered at their touch, for they must have been obtained with infinite personal peril, and, if found upon the Béguine, they might have brought her under the severest vengeance of the garrison. They were from Guiscard, Mariamne, and Mordecai. Thus to three individuals, all comparatively strangers, was my world reduced. But they were no common strangers; and I felt, while holding their letters in my hand, and almost pressing them to my heart, how much more strongly friendship may bind us than the ties of cold and negligent relationship. I opened the soldier's letter first. It was like everything that Guiscard ever did, manly, yet kind. "Your disappearance in that unfortunate rencontre had created much sorrow and surprise; but the sorrow was all for your loss to *the* 'corps of corps,' and the surprise was that no tidings could be heard of you, whether fallen or surviving. The flag and trumpet sent in next morning to obtain tidings of such as had suffered in that mad rush to the gates of the town, came back without being permitted to pass beyond the outworks, bringing a brutal message from the officer on duty 'that the next flag should be fired

on,' and that the 'brave soldiers of the Republic allowed of no compromise with the slaves of tyranny!' You are alive and in good hands—that is the grand point. Your character is now in *my* hands, and I shall take care of it; I shall see you a general officer yet, if you have not the greater luck to retire and live an honest farmer, sitting under your own fig-tree and your own vine, with an unromantic spouse and some half-dozen red-cheeked children. Farewell!—we shall *soon* see each other."

The last line evidently meant more than met the eye, and I was now just in the mind to indulge in the fantasies of my fair correspondent. They were like herself—a curious mixture of mirth and melancholy.

"Why I wish to write to you, or why I write at all—which, however, I do decorously at the side of my father—are questions which I have not taken the trouble of asking until this moment. But I am in Switzerland, where no one has time for anything but worshipping mountain-tops and falling down at the feet of cataracts. Whether it would add to Mr. Marston's satisfaction I cannot presume to say, but I feel better, much better, than when I first came into this land of fresh breezes and beauty of all kinds—the population, of every rank, always excepted.

"Have you a moment, among your thousand and one avocations, to remember my father—or me? I beg that I may not impede the march of armies, or shock the balance of Europe, while I solicit you to give me a single line—no more; a mere *annonce* of anything that can tell me of your *introuvable* friend Lafontaine. This is *not* for myself. The intelligence is required for a sister of his whom I have lately met in this country, a showy 'citizeness' of Zurich, *embonpoint* and matronly, married to one of the portly burghers of the city, and exemplary in all the arts of sheep-shearing, wool-spinning, and cheese-making.

"I have just returned from a drive along the shore of the Leman. The recollection of Madame Spiegler, rolling and rushing through the waltz like a dolphin through the waves, or like anything caught in an enormous whirlpool, and sweeping round perpetually until it was swept out of sight, had fevered me. The air here is certainly delicious. It gives a sense of life—a vivid yet soft feeling, that makes the mere

act of breathing it delightful. But I must make my *adieux*. *Apropos*, if you *should* accidentally hear anything of your *pélerin-à-pied* friend, Lafontaine—for I conjecture that he has gone to discover the fountains of the Nile, or is at this moment a candidate for the office of court-chamberlain at Timbuctoo—let me hear it. Madame Spiegler is really uneasy on the subject, though it has not diminished either her weight or her velocity, nor will prevent her waltzing till the end of the world or of herself. *One* sentence—nay, one syllable—will be enough.

"Still, may I beg of you, Mr. Marston, not to suppose that I mean to extend this letter to the size of a government despatch, or that the mark which I find I have left on my paper is a tear? *I* have no sorrow to make its excuse. But here one weeps for pleasure, and I can forgive even Rousseau his—'Je m'attendrissais, je soupirais, et je pleurais comme un enfant. Combien de fois, m'arrêtant pour pleurer plus à mon aise, assis sur une grosse pierre, je me suis amusé à voir tomber mes larmes dans l'eau!' Rousseau was lunatic, but he was *not* lunatic when he wrote this, or *I* am growing so too. For fear of that possible romance, I say farewell.

"P.S.—Remember Madame Spiegler. *Toujours à vous*, —MARIAMNE."

My third letter was Mordecai to the life— a bold, hurried, yet clear view of the political bearings of the time. It more than ever struck me, in the course of his daring paragraphs, what a capital leader he would have made for a Jewish revolution, if one could imagine the men of a thousand years of slavery grasping the sword and unfurling the banner.

After some personal details, and expressions of joy at the recovering health of his idolized but wayward daughter, he plunged into politics. "I have just returned," said he, "from a visit to some of our German kindred. You may rely upon it that a great game is on foot. *Your* invasion is a jest. Your troops will fight, I allow, but your cabinets will betray. I have seen enough to satisfy me that if you do not take Paris within the next three months, you will not take it within ten times the number of years. Of course I make no attempt at prediction. I leave infallibility to the

grave fools of conclaves and councils; but the French mob will beat them all. What army can stand before a contagion?

"Wait a twelvemonth, and you will see the flash and flame of French republicanism melting down every barrier of the Continent. The mob has the mob on its side for ever. The offer of liberty to men who have spent a thousand years under despotism is irresistible. Light may blind, but who loves utter darkness? The soldier may melt down like the rest; he is a man, and may be a madman like the rest: he too is lava, one of the multitude.

"If the French ever cross the Rhine, they will sweep everything before them as easily as a cloud sweeps across the sky, and with as little power in man to prevent them. A cluster of church steeples or palace turrets could do no more to stop the whirl of a hurricane.

"You will call me a panegyrist of republicanism, or of France. I have no love for either. But I may admire the spring of the tiger, or even give him credit for the strength of his tusks and the grasp of his talons, without desiring to see him take the place of my spaniel on the hearth-rug, or choosing him as the companion of my travels. *I* dread the power of the multitude, *I* despair of its discipline, and *I* shrink from the fury of its passions. A republic in France can be nothing but a funeral pile, in which the whole fabric is made not for use, but for destruction; which man cannot inhabit, but which the first torch will set in a blaze from the base to the summit; and upon which, after all, corpses alone crown the whole hasty and tottering erection. But this I *shall* say, that Germany is at this moment on the verge of insurrection, and that the first French flag which waves on the right bank of the Rhine will be the signal of the rising. I say more: that if the effect is to be permanent, pure, or beneficial, it will *not* be the result of the tricolor.

"The French conquests have always been brilliant, but it was the brilliancy of a soap-bubble. But when the Frenchman shall come among nations with the bayonet in his right hand and with the proclamation in his left,—when he shall turn his charger loose into the corn-field, and rob the peasant whom he harangues on the rights of the people, the

republican baptism will give no new power to the conversion. The German phlegm will kick, while the French *vivacité* scoffs and scourges; and then alone will the true war begin. Yet all this may be but the prelude. When the war of weapons has been buried in its own ashes, another war may begin—the war of minds; the struggle of mighty nations, the battle of an ambition of which our purblind age has not even a glimpse,—a terrible strife, yet worthy of the immortal principle in man, and to be rewarded by a victory which shall throw all the exploits of soldiership into the shade."

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHILE I was meditating on the hidden meanings of this letter, in which my Jewish friend seemed to have imbibed something of the mystical spirit of Germany itself, I was startled by a tremendous uproar around the hospital: the drums beat to arms, the garrison hastily mustered, the population poured into the streets, and a strong and startling light through all the casements showed that some great conflagration had just begun. The intelligence soon spread that the Hôtel de Ville, the noblest building in the province, a fine specimen of Italian architecture of the seventeenth century, and dear to the city as containing some incomparable pictures by the Italian masters, and a *chef d'œuvre* of Rubens, had been set on fire by a bomb, and was now in a blaze from battlement to ground. The next intelligence was still more painful. The principal convent of the city, which was close in its rear, had taken fire, and the unfortunate nuns were seen at the windows in the most imminent danger of perishing. Feeble as I was, I immediately arose.

The Hôtel de Ville was a large and nearly insulated building, with a kind of garden-walk round three of its sides, which was now filled with the populace. The garrison exhibited all the activity of the national character in their efforts to extinguish the flames. Scaling-ladders were applied to the windows, men mounted on them thick as bees; fire-buckets were passed from hand to hand, for

the fire-engines had been long since destroyed by the cannonade; and there seemed to be some hope of saving the structure, when a succession of agonizing screams fixed every eye on the convent, where the fire had found its way to the stores of wood and oil, and shot up like the explosion of gunpowder. The efforts of the troops were now turned to save its unhappy inmates, but the intense fury of the flames defeated every attempt. The scaling-ladders no sooner touched the casements than they took fire; the very walls were so hot that none could approach them; and every new gust swept down a sheet of flame which put the multitude to flight in all directions. Artillery was now brought out to breach the walls; but, while there remained a hundred and fifty human beings within, it was impossible to make use of the guns.

I proposed to the French officers that they should dig under the foundations, and thus open a way of escape through the vaults. The attempt was made, but it had the ill success of all the rest. The walls were too massive for our strength, and the pickaxe and spade were thrown aside in despair. From the silence which now seemed to reign within, and the volumes of smoke which poured from the casements, it began to be the general impression that the fate of the nuns was already decided; and the officers were about to limber up their guns and retire when I begged their chief to make one trial more, and fire at a huge iron door which closed a lofty archway leading to the Hôtel de Ville. He complied; a six-pound ball was sent against the door, and it flew off its hinges. To the boundless rejoicing and astonishment of all, we saw the effect of this fortunate shot in the emergence of the whole body of the nuns from the smoking and shattered building.

The troops and populace now rushed into the Hôtel de Ville, to meet and convey them to places of safety. I followed with the same object, yet with some unaccountable feeling that I had a personal interest in the rescue. The unhappy women were at length gathered from the different galleries through which they had scattered in their fright, and were mustered at the head of the principal entrance, or *grand escalier*, at whose foot an escort of the troops was drawn up for their protection.

But the terrors of that fearful night were not yet at an end. The light of the conflagration had caught the eye of the besiegers, and a whole flight of shells was sent in its direction. Some burst in the street, putting the populace to flight on every side; and, while the women were on the point of passing down the stair, a crash was heard above, and an enormous shell burst through the roof, carrying down shattered rafters, stones, and a cloud of dust. The batteries had found our range, and a succession of shells burst above our heads or tore their way downwards. At length one fell on the centre of the *escalier*, rolled down a few steps, and, bursting, tore up the whole stair, leaving only a deep gulf between us and the portal. I now regarded all as lost; and, expecting the roof to come down every moment on my head, and hearing nothing round me but the bursting and hissing of those horrible instruments of havoc, I hurried through the chambers in the hope of finding some casement from which I might reach the ground. They were all lofty and difficult of access, but I at length climbed up to one from which I determined to take the plunge.

I was about to leap when, to my infinite surprise, I heard my name pronounced. I stopped; I heard the words "*Adieu, pour toujours!*" All was dark within the room, but I returned to discover the speaker. It was a female, on her knees near the casement, and evidently preparing to die in prayer. I took her hand, and led her passively towards the window; she wore the dress of a nun, and her veil was on her face. As she seemed exhausted with terror, I gently moved it to give her air. A sheet of flame suddenly threw a broad light across the garden, and in that face I saw—Clotilde! She gave a feeble cry, and fainted in my arms. To die for her, or to die with her, seemed to me then preferable to all existence.

But ladders were brought, our escape was accomplished; and before I slept I had seen the being with whom my very existence was bound up safely lodged with the principal family of the town.

At the earliest moment which could be permitted by the formalities of France even in a besieged town, I flew to Clotilde. She received me with the candour of her noble

nature. Her countenance brightened with sudden emotion as she approached me. In the *salle de reception* she sat surrounded by the ladies of the family, still full of inquiries on the perils of the night, congratulations on her marvellous escape, and no slight approval of the effect of the convent costume on the contour of her fine form and expressive features. My entrance produced a diversion in her favour, and I was showered with showy speeches from the seniors of the circle. But I shrank from the panegyric of my "heroism," as it was pronounced in all the tones of courtesy, and longed for the voice of Clotilde alone. The circle at last withdrew, and I was left to the most exquisite enjoyment of which the mind of man is capable,—the full, fond, and faithful outpouring of the heart of the woman he loves. Strange to say, I had never exchanged a syllable with Clotilde before; and yet we now as deeply understood each other, were as much in each other's confidence, and had as little of the repulsive ceremonial of a first interview, as if we had conversed for years.

"You saved my life," said she, "and you are entitled to my truest gratitude to my last hour. I had made up my mind to die. I was exhausted in the attempt to escape from that scene of horrors. When at last I reached the Hôtel de Ville, and found that all the sisterhood had been driven back from the great stair by the flames, I gave up all hope; and may I acknowledge, unblamed, to you—but from *you* what right have I now to conceal any secret of my feelings? —I was not unwilling to lay down a life which seemed to grow darker from day to day?"

"You were wearied of your convent life?" said I, fixing my eyes on hers with eager inquiry. "But you must not tell me that you are a nun. The new laws of France forbid that sacrifice. My sweet Clotilde, while I live I shall never recognize your vows."

"You need not," she answered; "I have never taken them. The superior of the convent was my near relative, and I fled to her protection from the pursuit of one whom I never could have respected, and whom later thoughts have made me all but abhor."

"Montrecour! I shall pursue him through the world."

"No," said Clotilde; "he is as unworthy of your resent-

ment as of my recollection. *He is a traitor to his king*, and a disgrace to his nobility. He is now a general in the republican service—Citizen Montrecour. But we must talk of him no more."

She blushed deeply, and after some hesitation said, "I am perfectly aware that the marriages customary among our noblesse were too often contracted in the mere spirit of exclusiveness; and I own that the proposal of my alliance with the Marquis de Montrecour was a family arrangement, perfectly in the spirit of other days. But my residence in England changed my opinions on the custom of my country, and I determined—never to marry." She stopped short, and with a faint smile said, "But let us talk of something else." Her cheek was crimson, and her eyes were fixed on the ground.

"No, Clotilde, talk of nothing else. Talk of your feelings, your sentiments, of yourself and all that concerns yourself. No subject on earth can ever be so delightful to your friend. But talk of what you will, and I shall listen with a pleasure which no human being has ever given me before, or ever shall give me again."

She raised her magnificent eyes, and fixed them full upon me with an involuntary look of surprise, then grew suddenly pale, and closed them as if she felt sudden pain. "I must listen," said she faintly, "to this language no longer. I know you to be above deception. I know you to be above playing with the vanity of one unused to praise, and to such praise. But I have a spirit as high as your own. Let us be friends. It will give an additional honour to my name; shall I say"—and she faltered—"an additional interest to my existence? But now we must part for a while."

"Never!" was my explanation. "The world does not contain two Clotildes. And you shall never leave me. You have just told me that I preserved your life. Why shall I not be its protector still? Why not be suffered to devote mine to making yours happy?" But the bitter thought struck me as I uttered the words—how far was I from the power of giving this incomparable creature the station in society which was hers by right! Again one glance drove all doubts away, and I took her hand.

She looked at me with speechless embarrassment, sighed deeply, and a tear stole down her cheek. At length, withdrawing her hand, she said, in almost a whisper, and with an evident effort, "This must not be. I feel infinite honour in your good opinion—deeply grateful for your kindness. But this must not be. Believe me I should rather wear this habit for life than make so ungenerous a return to the noble spirit that can thus offer its friendship to a stranger."

"No, Clotilde—no. Again, in my turn, I say this must not be; you are *no* stranger. I know you at this hour as well as if I had known you from the first hour of my being. I gave my heart to you from the moment when I first saw you among your countrywomen in England. From that day, Clotilde, you were my thought by day, and my dream by night. All my desires of distinction were that it might be seen by your eye; all my hopes of fortune, that I might be enabled to lay it at your feet. If a throne were offered to me on condition of renouncing you, I should have rejected it. If it were my lot to labour in the humblest rank of life with *you* by my side, I should have cheerfully laboured; and, with your hand in mine, should have said I have found what is worth the world—happiness!"

Tears flowed down her cheeks, which were now like marble. She feebly attempted to smile, while, with eyelids drooping and her whole frame quivering with emotion, she murmured in broken accents, "It is impossible—utterly impossible! Leave me. I must not bring you a portionless, a helpless, a nameless being—a dependant on your kindness, a burden on your fortune, an obstacle to your whole advance in the world!" A rich flush suddenly lighted up her lovely countenance, and a new splendour flashed from her eyes. She threw back her head loftily, and, looking handsomer than ever, "No," said she, "I am as proud as you. I have had noble ancestors; I have borne a noble name. If that name has fallen, it is in the common wreck of my country. Our fortunes have sunk, only where our monarchy has gone down along with them; and I shall never degrade the memory of those ancestors, nor humiliate still more the fallen name of our house, by imposing my obscurity and poverty on one who has honoured

me as you have done. Now—*farewell!* My resolution is fixed. Farewell, my friend! I shall never forget this day." She turned away her face, and wept abundantly; then, fixing a long look on me, she added—"I own that it would be a consolation to Clotilde de Tourville to believe that she may be sometimes remembered; but, until times change, we meet no more—if they change not, we now *part* for ever."

I was so completely startled, so thunderstruck, by this declaration, that I could not utter a word. I stood gazing at her with open lips. I felt a mist gathering over my eyes. I tottered to the sofa, and pressed my hand in pain upon my brow: when I withdrew it I was alone—Clotilde was gone; she had vanished with the silence of a vision.

I left the house immediately, and in a state of mind which seemed like a dissolution of all my faculties. I could not speak, I could scarcely see, I could only gasp for air, and retain sufficient power over my limbs to guide my steps to my melancholy dwelling. There I threw myself on my rough bed, and lingered throughout the day in fiery feverishness of mind and body, which I sometimes thought to be the approach of death. How little could Clotilde have intended that I should suffer thus for her high-toned delicacy! Still, in all my misery of soul, I did her justice. I remembered the countenance of melancholy beauty with which she announced her final determination. There was so lofty a spirit in her glance, so true a sincerity in her language, so pure and transparent a truth in her sighs, and smiles, and involuntary tears, that I acquitted her, from my soul, of all attempts to try or to triumph over my devotion to her.

More than once during that night of anguish I imagined the scene of the day to be actually passing again before my eyes. Deep but exquisite illusion! which I cherished, and loved to renew, until, suddenly aroused by some changing of the sentinels or passing of the attendants, I looked round and saw nothing but the gloomy roof, the old flickering of the huge lantern hanging from the centre of the hall, and the beds where so many had slept their last, and which so many of the sleepers were never to

leave with life. I then had the true experience of human passion. Love, in the light and gay, may be as sportive as themselves; in the calm and grave it may be firm and deep; but in some it is strong as tempest, and consuming as flame.

I should probably have closed my days in that place of all afflicting sights and sounds, but for my good old nurse. "See my own condition," said she, striving to bring her memory in aid of her advice. "At fifteen I was a barmaid at the Swartz Adler; there I ran in and out, danced at all the family *fêtes*, and was as gay as a bird on the tree. But that life was too good to last. At twenty a corporal of Prussian dragoons fell in love with me, or I with him—it is all the same. His regiment was ordered to Silesia, and away we marched. But if ever there was a country of fogs, that was the one. There are, now and then, a few even in our delightful France; but, in Silesia, they have a patent for them, they have them *par privilège*;—if men could eat them, there would never be a chance of starving in Silesia. So we all got sore throats. Cannon and musketry were nothing to them. Our dragoons dropped off like flies at the end of summer; and unless we had been ordered away to keep the Turks from marching to Berlin, or the saints know where, the regiment would have had its last quarters in this world within a league of the marshes of Breslau. So I say ever since, take care of damp."

Having thus relieved her good-natured spirit of its burden, she proceeded to give me snatches of her history. The corporal had fallen a victim—though whether to Silesian fog, brandy, or the bullet, she left doubtful—and she had married his successor in the rank. Love and matrimony in the army are of a different order from either in civil life; for the love is perpetual, the matrimony precarious. Juliet acknowledged that she never left above a month's interval between her afflictions as a widow and her consolations as a wife. In the course of time she changed her service. A handsome Austrian sergeant won her heart and hand, and she followed him into Hungary. There, between marsh-fever and Turkish skirmishing, various casualties occurred in the matrimonial list; and Juliet, who evidently had been a handsome brunette, and whose French vivacity distanced

all the heavy charms of the Austrian peasant belles, was never without a husband. At length, like other veterans, having served her country to the full extent of her patriotism, she was discharged with her tenth husband, and, of course, induced the honest Austrian to come to the only country on which, in a Frenchwoman's creed, the sun shines. There the Austrian died.

"I loved him," said the Béguine, wiping her eyes. "He was an excellent fellow, though dull; and I believe, next to smoking and schnaps, he loved me better than anything else in the world. But, on his emperor's birthday, which he always kept with a bottle of brandy additional, he rambled out into the fog, and came back with a cold. *Peste!* I knew that it was all over with him; but I nursed him like a babe, and he died, like a true Austrian, with his meerschaum in his mouth, bequeathing me his snuff-box, the certificate of his pension, and his blessing. I buried him, got pensioned, and was broken-hearted. But what then was to be done? I was born for society. I once or twice thought of an eleventh husband; but I was now rich. I had above a thousand francs, and a pension of a hundred; this perplexed me. I was determined to be married for myself alone. Yet how could I know whether the hypocrites who clustered round me were not thinking of my money all the while? So I determined to marry no more, and became a Béguine."

In all my vexation, I could not help turning my eyes upon the sentimentalist. She interpreted it in the happy way of her country. "You wonder at my self-denial," said she; "I perceive it in your astonishment. I was *but* fifty then. Yes," said she, clasping her hands and looking pathetic, "I acknowledge that it *was* cruel. What right had I to break so many hearts? I have much to answer for—and I *but* fifty! I am even now but fifty-six. Yet, observe, I have taken no vows; remark *that*, monsieur le capitaine. At this moment I am only a *Sœur de Charité*. No, nothing shall ever induce me to make or keep the vows. *I* am free to marry to-morrow; and I only beg, monsieur le capitaine, that when you are well enough to go abroad again, whether in the town or in the country, or in whatever part of Europe you may travel, you will have the kindness

to state positively, most positively, that Juliet Donnertronk, *née* Ventrebleu, has not taken, and never will take, any vows whatever!"

"Not even those of marriage, Juliet?" asked I.

She laughed, and patted my burning head, with—"*Ah, vous êtes bien bon! Ah, moqueur Anglais!*" finishing with all the pantomime of blushing confusion, and starting away like a fluttered pigeon.

As soon as I felt able to move, which was not till some days after, my first effort was to reach the mansion in which Clotilde resided. But there I received the startling intelligence that, on the evening of the day of my first and last visit, she had left the town with the superior of the convent. She had made such urgent entreaties to the governor to be permitted to leave Valenciennes, that he had obtained a passport for her from the general commanding the trenches; and not only for her, but also for the nuns, the burning of whose convent had left them houseless.

But it was my fate, or perhaps my good fortune, never to be suffered to brood long over my own calamities. My life has been spent in the midst of tumults, which, if they did not extinguish—and what could extinguish?—the sense of my mental trials, at least prevented the echo of my complaints from returning to my ears. Before the midnight of the very day on which I had lost the only being for whom I now lived, the whole city was alarmed by the intelligence that the besiegers were evidently preparing for an assault.

But an order came suddenly to the engineer in command of the quarter to send all the patients into the vaults, and throw all the beds on the roof, to deaden the weight of the fire. He was a man of gentlemanlike manners, and had been attentive to me in the shape of many of those minor civilities which a man of severe authority might have refused, but which mark kindliness of disposition. On this night he told me that he had orders to put all the prisoners in arrest, but that, regarding me more as a friend than a prisoner, I was at liberty to take any precaution for my security which I thought proper. My answer was, that "I hoped, at all events, not to be shut into the vaults, but to take my chance above ground." To compromise the diff-

culty, I proposed to assist in carrying the mattresses to the roof, and to remain there until the night was over.

"It will be soon over with us all, and with Valenciennes," said the officer; "though whether to-night or not is a question. We have seen new batteries raised within the last twenty-four hours. The enemy have now nearly three hundred heavy guns in full play, and, to judge from the quantity of shells, they must have a hundred mortars besides. No fortress can stand this; and if it continues we shall soon be ground into dust." He took his leave; and, with my mattress on my shoulder, I mounted the numberless and creaking staircases, until the door of the roof and the landscape opened on me together—never was a landscape less tempting.

The night was excessively dark, but perfectly calm, and, except where the fire from the batteries marked their position, all objects beyond the ramparts were nearly invisible. The town around me lay silent, and looking more like a vast grave than a place of human existence. Now and then the light of a lantern gliding along the ruined streets showed me a group of wretched beings hurrying a corpse to the next churchyard, or a priest seeking his way over the smoking ruins, to attend some dying soldier or citizen. All was utter desolation.

But a new scene—a terrible and yet a superb one—suddenly broke upon me. A gleam of lights from various points of the allied lines showed that a general movement was begun. The batteries now opened along the whole extent of the trenches, and by their blaze I was able to discern, formed in their rear, and advancing, two immense columns, which, however, in the distance and the fitfulness of the glare, looked more like huge clouds than living beings. The guns of the ramparts soon replied, and the roar was deafening, while the plunging of shot along the ramparts and roofs made our situation perilous in no slight degree. But, in the midst of this hurricane of fire, I saw a single rocket shoot up from the camp, and the whole range of the batteries ceased at the instant. The completeness of the cessation was scarcely less appalling than the roar.

While every telescope was instantly turned to the spot,

where the columns and batteries seemed to have sunk together into the earth, a pyramid of blasting flame burst up to the very clouds, carrying with it huge fragments of beams and masonry. The explosion rent the air, and shook the building on which I stood as if it had been a house of sand. A crowd of engineer and staff officers now rushed on the roof, and their alarm at the results of the concussion was undisguised. "This is what we suspected," said the chief to me; "but it was impossible to discover where the gallery of their mine was run. Our counter-mine has clearly failed." He had scarcely spoken the words before a second and still broader explosion tore up the ground to a great extent, and threw the counterscarp for several hundred yards into the ditch. The drums of the columns were now distinctly heard beating the advance; but darkness had again fallen, and all was invisible. A third explosion followed, still closer to the ramparts, which blew up the face of the grand bastion. The stormers now gave a general shout, and I saw them gallantly dashing across the ditch and covered way, tearing down the palisades, fighting hand to hand, clearing the outworks with the bayonet, and finally making a lodgment on the bastion itself. The red-coats, which now swarmed through the works, and the colours planted on the rampart, showed me that my countrymen had led the assault, and my heart throbbed with envy and admiration. "Why am I not there?" was my involuntary cry, as I almost wished that some of the shots which were now flying about the roofs would relieve me from the shame of being a helpless spectator. "*Mon ami*," said the voice of the brave and good-natured Frenchman, who had overheard me, "if you wish to rejoin your regiment, you will not have long to wait. Yet this affair will not be decided to-night, as I thought that it would half an hour ago. To-morrow will tell us something. Pack up your valise. *Bon soir!*"

CHAPTER XXXII.

VALENCIENNES was now captured. The sagacity of my friend, the French engineer, had not been deceived. Th

explosion of the three great mines—an operation, from its magnitude, almost new to war, and in its effects irresistible—had thrown open the fortress. The garrison had done their duty gallantly, and the result was a capitulation, hastened by the outcry of the famishing inhabitants. I hastened to the quarters of my regiment, was received with all cordiality, and had the honour of an interview with the royal duke, who, at all times affable, was now in peculiar good-humour, and who led me into a long detail of such public matters as might be gathered from my intercourse with the garrison. At the close of our interview he gave me a note, which was to be forwarded to the adjutant-general. I made my bow, and retired.

All in the camp was now festivity. A great achievement had been accomplished, and the barriers of France were broken down. Yet, in the midst of national triumph, I felt a depression which rendered me almost incapable of sharing it. The wounds of the spirit are not to be healed like those of the frame; and with the recollection of the noble creature whom I had lost, bitterness mingled in every sound, and sight, and exultation. Still I continued making every imaginable inquiry, despatching letters, and feeing postmasters, to obtain intelligence of the route which Clotilde had taken. But, after tracing her for the first few leagues, all tidings were lost; and I had only to trust to that hope which was a part of my sanguine nature, and which was sustained by a kind of consciousness that a being so superior could not be flung away in the chances which visit the multitude.

While I was thus pondering and perplexed, I was summoned to attend one of the principal officers of the staff. "We are sending despatches of some importance to London," said he, "and it is the wish of the commander-in-chief that you should be their bearer. I have the pleasure to tell you that he feels an interest in you, from the opportunities which you have had of distinguishing yourself in the campaign, and that he has appointed you one of his extra aides-de-camp. Your service begins soon," added my informant with a smile, "for you must set off to-night. His Royal Highness is satisfied, from his conversation with you, that you will be perfectly fit for this purpose; and

here is the letter, with which you are to make all expedition to the Horse Guards."

After making my preparations for the journey, I hastened to take leave of my unfailing friend Guiscard. To my surprise, he received the intelligence of my appointment with scarcely a word of congratulation. Little as I myself was now excitable by anything in the shape of human fortune, I was chagrined by his obstinate gravity. He observed it, and started from his seat. "Come," said he, "let us take a walk, and get out of the sight of mankind, if we can." He took my arm, and we strayed along the banks of the Scheldt. The bargemen were enjoying the fine July evening in the national style,—swilling the worst beer that ever punished the taste for that barbarian beverage, and filling the fresh breeze with the fumes of tobacco, worthy of the beer. Guiscard stopped to gaze at them.

"I envy those fellows," said he, "not merely for their escaping all care, and being able to extract enjoyment out of their execrable drink and pipes, but from their being exempt from all contact with portfolios."

"But such enjoyment is only that of the swine."

"Well, and is not that of the swine perfect?—and what would you have more than perfection?"

A huge herd of those creatures, coming along the miry edge of the river, helped his illustration. "Mr. Marston, you have not been for the last month on the staff of the commander-in-chief of the allied armies, or you would not look so incredulous. Sir, I allow that man's senses may be as suitable for his purposes as those of the animals which we see wallowing there." I stared, waiting for the conclusion. He proceeded. "But man has drawbacks on his natural faculties which they have not. Nature possibly intended that we should be as happy as they. But make nine-tenths of them hewers of wood and drawers of water, send some of them to dungeons, enforce a conscription among the rest, and order them to use their tusks upon each other; and the most complacent of them would rebel. Or, as the last trial of temper, put the meekest of the race into a cabinet of princes and general officers, themselves controlled by a cabinet five hundred miles off; and if they

do not growl as I do now, I shall give up all my knowledge of quadruped nature."

"Why, Guiscard, what is the matter with you to-night? Have we not gained our point? You are like the Thracians, who always mourned at the birth of a child."

"And the Thracians were perfectly right, if the child were to be reared a diplomatist. You talk of success!" Our path had led to where a view of Valenciennes opened on us through the trees; and its shattered ramparts and curtains, the trees felled along its glacis, and its bastions stripped and broken by our cannon-balls, certainly presented a rueful spectacle. The Austrian flag was flying on the citadel.

"There," said he, "is our prize. It is not worth the loading of a single gun; but it has cost us more millions to ruin than it took francs to build—it has cost us the conquest of France, and will cost Europe the war which we might have extinguished three months ago if we had but left it behind. Delay has ruined everything. Our march to Paris, and our march to Georgium Sidus, will now be finished on the same day."

I attempted to laugh off his predictions, but he was intractable. "The business," said he, "is over. That flag is the signal of European jealousy and the pledge of French triumph. That flag, which pretends to partition France, will unite it as one man. Our sages here are actually about to play its game. Orders have come to divide the army. What folly! What inconceivable infatuation! In the very face of the most fantastic and most furious population of mankind—a race whom the most trivial success inflames into enthusiasts—they are going to break up their force, and seek adventures by brigades and battalions."

He stamped on the ground with indignation; but, suddenly recovering his calmness, he turned to me with his grave smile. "I am ashamed, Marston, of thus betraying a temper which time ought to have cooled."

"Do you object to our duke?"

"Not in the least. He is personally a gallant fellow; and if he wants experience, so does every man at one time or other. His only error, hitherto, has been his conde-

seeming to come at all with so small a force under his command. The duke's being put at the head of your troops—only a division after all—seems to me the only wise thing that has been done. Your king gives his son as your country gives her soldiers and your people give their money. The whole was manly, magnanimous, or, as the highest panegyric, it was English all over."

This language at once put an end to all my reserve. I shook his hand in the spirit of old friendship, and, on our parting, extracted a promise of keeping up our communication on all possible opportunities.

By midnight I was on my journey. My route lay through the Flemish provinces, which had now recovered all their luxuriance, if not derived additional animation from the activity which everywhere follows the movements of a successful army. Troops marching to join the general advance frequently and strikingly diversified the scene. Huge trains of the commissariat were continually on the road. The little civic authorities were doubly conscious of the dignity of functions which brought them into contact with soldiership, from the quartermaster up to the general.

But, from the moment when I touched British ground, I was in the midst of a nation in a ferment. The war was the universal topic; party was in full life; from the inn at Dover up to the waiting-room at the Horse Guards, I heard nothing but politics. The conduct of our army—the absurdity of everything that had been done, or left undone—the failures of the allies—the fanaticism of the French—the hopes of popular liberty on one side, and the indignaton of established power on the other—came echoing and re-echoing in a clamour of discordant conceptions that for the time bewildered me. The journals printed their columns in gall; the satirists dipped their pens in concentrated acid; the popular haranguers dashed the oil of vitriol of contempt in each other's faces. The confusion, the collision, the uproar, was indescribable.

But my whole experience of public life has told me that, however the popular opinion may be wrong, the public opinion is right; and I felt that the nation was already adverse to the conduct of the campaign. The utmost skill

of the cabinet was required to prevent a dangerous reaction. The member of administration with whom my chief intercourse now officially existed, was the same manly and kind-natured individual to whom I had formerly been indebted for so much civility; and, as if proud of his own work, his official civility now took the form of friendship. Ill news came from abroad, and I expressed my impatience of remaining with the pen in my hand when I should have worn my sword. To all my suggestions on the subject the good-humoured answer was that my services were still necessary at home. At length, on my making a decided request that I should be permitted to return to my regiment, he told me in confidence that the campaign was probably at an end; that the British commander-in-chief was about to return; and that, in fact, the strength of England would be turned to the naval war. At the close of one of those conversations, fixing his keen grey eye upon me, he said, "Pray, what think you of parliament?" My answer was that mediocrity was more contemptible there than anywhere else, while success was more difficult.

"Oh, you mean such success as Pitt's: you mean triumph. But you must get those Greek and Roman notions out of your head. An English House does not want orators. One on a side is quite enough. Pitt is an exception; he is equal to everything, an incomparable man of business. Burke, or some other man of metaphor, compared him justly to the falcon, which, however high it may soar, always follows the prey with its eye along the ground. But two Pitts, if nature could be prolific of such magnificent monsters, would absolutely perplex us. What could be more confusing than to have two suns shining at the same time?"

"But is Fox nothing?" I asked.

"A great deal," was the answer. "He is the finest talker, I suppose, in the world;—the first of babblers."

"Of babblers?" I repeated in surprise.

"Yes; for what is babbling but speaking in vain,—pouring out endless speculations without a purpose, or the hope of a purpose—indulging a remarkably powerful and productive mind with the waste of its own conceptions—

lavishing a whole coinage of splendid thoughts, with no more expectancy of a practical result than if he flung the mint into the Thames?"

This conversation was evidently more than accidental; and I gave to it some of my most perplexing hours. I had an original fondness for the life of arms. I was of the age to feel its variety, animation, and ardour. My experience had been fortunate; I had seen nothing but victory, and had been flattered by personal distinctions. But then came the reverse of the medal. I remembered the opinion of the most sagacious and penetrating spirit which it had been my lot ever to know, and I felt that the Continent was to be our field of battle no longer. On the other hand, supposing that I possessed the faculties for political life, was I possessed of the temper, had I the endurance of toil, the measureless patience, the inexhaustible equanimity, which every night of my public existence would henceforth demand?

But I soon made up my mind. The question narrowed itself to this: Which was the more active life? The point of honour was no longer in the adherence to a profession whose purposes were necessarily changed. Every hour gave additional evidence that the gates of the Continent were closing upon the English soldier. On the other hand, influence, impression, publicity, were the prizes of a political career. I saw all other names fade before the great senatorial names of England. I heard men of humble extraction among them filling the world with their fame. Whether I should ever take my place among those illustrious names, scarcely entered into my thoughts. But I was determined never to waste my life in conscious indolence. Scarcely knowing what faculties I might possess, I fully resolved on trying their utmost strength; and, grown almost indifferent to the ordinary pursuits of human ambition, I looked with something of a melancholy yet proud hope to the enjoyment which was to be found in giving myself up to the solitary and stern toil of living for a great cause, and leaving a name behind me that should not be forgotten.

On that very day the intelligence arrived that the British troops had marched for the north of Germany; that the

give him new vigour; the attempt to tear the robe of office from his shoulders only gave the nobler display of his intellectual proportions.

I speak of those times, and of the great men of those times, in no invidious contrast with later days. I have so strong a faith in the intellectual vigour which freedom gives to a great empire, that I am convinced of our being able, in all its eras, to find the express species of public talent essential to its services. I regard the national mind as the philosopher does the natural soil, always capable of the essential produce where we give it the due tillage. The great men of the past century passed away along with it; they were summoned for a day of gigantic conflict, and were formed for that conflict; their muscular vigour, the power with which they wielded their weapons, the giant step, and the giant hand, were all necessary, and were all shaped and sustained by that necessity. But their day had its close; the leaders of man, like the "mighty hunters" of an age when the land was still overshadowed with the forest, and the harvest was overrun with the lion and the panther, would naturally give place to a less daring and lofty generation when the forest had given way to the field, and the lair of the wild beast had become the highway and the bower.

But if the evil day should again return, the guardian power of intellect and virtue will again come forth in the human shape, and vindicate the Providence that watches over the progress of mankind. I utterly deny the exhaustion of national genius; I even deny its exhaustibility. When the true day of trial shall come—when an enemy shall be seen hovering on the coasts of the constitution—when trumpet answers trumpet, and national freedom is proclaimed "in danger,"—then, and not till then, shall we know the superb resources of our intellectual strength: whatever may have been the prowess of the past, we may see it not merely rivalled, but thrown into eclipse, by the future; the burnished armour and massive swords and maces of our old intellectual chivalry superseded only by more manageable and more irresistible implements of success; and the sterner conflict only followed by the more consummate triumph.

Anne's Augustan age of war, negotiation, and eloquence was once pronounced to be, like the Augustan age of Rome, incapable of rivalship by posterity. Yet our own times have seen a bolder war, a broader peace, and a richer development of science, invention, and eloquence. For fifty years England was pronounced to have worn herself out by the prolific brilliancy of the half-century before; like a precocious infant, to have anticipated her powers, and ensured their premature decay; or, like the Bœotians, to have had her Pindaric period, and to be thenceforward doomed to pay for her rapture and renown by perpetual darkness.

Whether it was my good or ill fortune to make my first effort in the midst of the men whose names immortalized their day, I shall not venture to decide. But my resolve had been firmly taken—not to remain in Parliament, unless I discovered in myself faculties fit for its service. I was determined not to play the mute if I had the means of uttering a voice. But now the whole force of administration was demanded; and I made up my mind to ascertain by trial, what no man can be sure of without that trial, whether I possessed any capacity for a life of public service, or was entitled to form a hope of personal distinction.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The subject on which I first spoke was an address to the throne, in answer to the king's message on the war. On this night Pitt, but lately recovered from a fit of his hereditary gout, spoke briefly, and with evident feebleness of frame. Fox, whose energy seemed always to depend on his rival's power, and whose eloquence always rose or fell with the vigour or languor of the minister—Fox, never so great as when Pitt put forth all his strength, on this night idled away the hour, through the mere want of an antagonist; but Sheridan made ample compensation for his leader. The House had fallen into lassitude, and the benches were already thin when he rose. I had heard him as the humourist on some trivial occasions of debate; I had often enjoyed the social pleasantry which placed

him at the head of the wits; but I was still but imperfectly acquainted with the strong sarcasm, the deep disdain, and the grave sophistry which this extraordinary man could exhibit with such redundant ease, and wield with such practised dexterity. I must give but an outline of a noble picture.

"You have made war," said he, "and you have made the arms of your country contemptible by failures which you rendered inevitable by your rashness. You, sir," and he fixed his flashing eye on the premier, "have commenced that war by a series of declarations which made our diplomacy as contemptible as our campaigns. The national sword has been wrested from our hands. But you were not content with that humiliation, and you added to it the disgrace of the national understanding. You laid down a succession of principles, and then trampled them in the dust on the first opportunity. You encumbered yourself for action with pledges which you could never have intended to sustain, or which, in the first collision, your pusillanimity threw away. Yet I deprecate the perfidy of those measures even more than I despise their weakness. I can comprehend the effrontery of aggression, but I scorn the meanness of intrigue. I may face the soldier, but I shudder at the assassin. I may determine to hunt down and destroy the lion, but I disdain the trap and the pitfall. And what has been the pretext of his majesty's ministers? Moderation. In this spirit of moderation they invaded France; in this spirit of moderation they captured her fortresses, and then handed them over to the Emperor; in this spirit of moderation they denounced the men who had given France a constitution; and in this spirit of moderation you now prepare to rebuild her Bastille, to restore her scaffolds, to reforge her chains, and summon all the kings of Europe, instead of taking a salutary lesson from the tomb of the monarchy, to see its skeleton exhumed, and placed, robed and crowned, upon the throne, with the nation forced to offer homage, at once in mockery and terror, to the grinning emblem, in which, with all your philtres, you can never put life again."

The orator then gave a general and singularly imposing view of the state of our European connections, which he

described as utterly frail, the result of interested motives, and sure to be broken up at the first temptation. But the "First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of his Majesty's Exchequer," said he, "smiles at my alarm; he has his security at his side—he has the purse, which commands all the baser portion of our nature with such irresistible control! On one point I fully agree with the right honourable gentleman—that nothing but the purse could ever keep them faithful. Yet is there nothing but gold that can bribe? Is there no bribe in territory? Will he not find, when he hurries to the purchase of allies with the millions of the treasury in his hand, that more powerful purchasers have been there before him? When he offers the loan, will he not find them offering the province?—when he bids with the subsidy, will he not be outbid with the kingdom? Within ten years, if England exists, she will be without an ally on earth; or, if she continues to fight, it will be in loneliness, in terror, and in despair."

In this strain he poured out his daring conceptions for more than two hours, during which he kept the whole audience in the deepest attention. He concluded in an uproar of plaudits from both sides of the House.

My time now came. And the rising of a new member, always regarded with a generous spirit of courtesy, produced some additional interest, from the knowledge of my services on the Continent, and my immediate connection with the ministry. The House, which had filled to overflowing in the course of Sheridan's incomparable speech, was now hushed in the most total silence, and every eye was turned on me. I shall say nothing of my perturbation further than that I had stood before an enemy's line of ten thousand men, with their muskets levelled within half a hundred yards of me, and that I thought the benches of the House of Commons on that night looked much the more formidable of the two. While I attempted to mutter a few sentences, of which I felt the sound die within my lips, my eye was caught by the quick turn of Pitt's head, who fixed his impatient glance upon me. Fox, with that kindliness of heart which always forgot party when a good-natured act was to be done, gave his sonorous cheer. From that instant I breathed freely, and, recovering my voice and

mind together, I plunged boldly into the boundless subject before me.

After discussing a few of the showy sophisms which the orator of the opposition had constructed into his specious argument, I placed the war on the ground of necessity. "Nations cannot act like individuals—they cannot submit to self-sacrifice—they cannot give up their rights—they cannot affect an indolent disdain or an idle generosity. The reason of the distinction is, that in every instance the nation is a trustee—it has the rights of posterity in its keeping—it has nothing of its own to throw away—it is responsible to every generation to come. *If war be essential* to the integrity of the empire, war is as much a duty—a terrible duty, I allow—as the protection of our children's property from the grasp of rapine, or the defence of their lives against the midnight robber. But we are advised to peace. No man on earth would do more willing homage than myself to that beneficent genius of nations.

"But where am I to offer my homage? Am I to kneel on the high road where the enemy's armies, fierce with the hope of plunder, are rushing along? Am I to build my altar in the midst of contending thousands, or on the ground covered with corpses—in the field of battle, or on the grave? Or am I to carry my offering to the capital, and there talk the language of national cordiality in the ear of the multitude dragging their king to the scaffold? Am I to appeal to the feelings of human brotherhood in streets smoking with civil massacre; to adjure the nation by the national honour, where revolt is an avowed principle; to press upon them the opinion of Europe, where they have proclaimed war with the world; to invoke them by the faith which they have renounced, or the allegiance which they have disdained, or the God whom they have blasphemed? Are those things possible? If we are to have a treaty with this new order of thinking and action, it must be on principles like their own; it must be a compact of crime, a solemn agreement of treachery, a formal bond of plunder; it must be a treaty fitter for the cavern of conspiracy than for the chamber of council; its pledge must be like that of Catiline, the cup of human blood!

"No! the most powerful reprobation which ever shot

from the indignant lip of the moralist, would not be too strong for the baseness which stooped to such a treaty, or for the folly which entangled itself in such toils. No! if we must violate the simplicity of our national objects by such degrading and such desperate involvements, if we should not shrink from this conspiracy against mankind, let it at least not be consummated in the face of day; let us at once abandon the hollow pretences of human honesty; let us pledge ourselves to a perpetual league with rapine and revolution; let it be transacted not in this place of national council, but in some haunt of darkness and shame; and let its ceremonial be worthy of the spirit of evil which it embodies, whose power it proclaims, and to whose supremacy it commands all nations to bow down."

In alluding to the menace that our allies would soon desert us, I asked, "Is this to be the magnanimity of party? Is England to be pronounced so poor or so pusillanimous that she must give up all hope unless she can be suffered to lurk in the rear of the battle? Is she only to borrow the shattered armour which has hung up for ages in the halls of continental royalty, and encumber herself with its broken and rusty panoply for the ridicule of the world?

"But we are told that all is lost. I allow that the European governments have undergone the vicissitudes of fortune. But, instead of scoffing at the facility of their overthrow, let us raise them on their feet again; or, if that be beyond human means, I shall not join the party cry which insults their fall. I certainly shall not exult in that melancholy pageant of mixed mirth and scorn in which, like the old Roman triumph, the soldier with his ruthless jest and song goes before the chariot, and the captive monarch follows behind, wearing the royal robe and the diadem only till he has gratified a barbarous curiosity or a cruel pride, and then exchanging them for the manacle and the dungeon. I deprecate the loss of these alliances, and yet I doubt whether the country will ever be conscious of her true strength until the war of the Continent is at an end. I more than doubt the wisdom of suffering others to take the lead which belongs to us by the right of superior rank, superior prowess, and superior fame. I shall have but slight regret for the fall of those outworks which—massive, nay,

majestic, as they are—waste the power of England by the division of her force, and make us decline the gallant enterprise of the field,—ramparts and fosses which reduce us to defence, and which, while they offer a thousand points of entrance to an active assault, shut us in, and disqualify us from victory."

I now repeat this language of the moment solely from later and long experience of its truth. I fully believe that if England had come forward to the front of the battle in the early years of the war, she would have crushed all resistance; or if she had found, by the chance of things, the Continent impenetrable to her arms, she would have shut it in with a circumvallation of iron until its factions had worn each other out, and dismay had subdued the frenzy of the age.

I was now fully engaged in public life. The effort which I had made in parliament had received the approval of Pitt, who, without stooping to notice things so trivial as style and manner on questions of national life and death, highly applauded the courage which had dared to face so distinguished a parliamentary favourite as Sheridan, and which had taken a view of affairs so accordant with his own. From this period I was constantly occupied in debate; and, taking the premier for my model, I made rapid proficiency in the difficult art of addressing a British House of Commons.

Of course I have no idea of giving myself that praise on the subject which no man can give to himself on any without offence. But I felt that it was an *art* which might escape, and which had often escaped, men of distinguished ability, yet might be possessed by men of powers altogether inferior. I must acknowledge, too, that a portion of my success was owing to the advice of that shrewdest and at the same time most friendly of human beings, the secretary.

"You must be a man of business," said he, "or you will be nothing; for praise is nothing—popularity is nothing—even the applause of the House is nothing. These matters pass away, and the orators pass away with them. John Bull is a solid animal, and likes reality. Sheridan, at this moment, has no more weight in the House than he had with

a twelvemonth after taking his seat. Fox, with the most powerful abilities, is looked on as little beyond a magnificent speechmaker. His only weight is in his 'following.' Pitt is a man of business, complete, profound, indefatigable. If you have his talents, copy his prudence; if you have not, still copy his prudence—make it the interest of men to consult you, and you must be ultimately successful."

There never was a time when all the maxims of political wisdom were more required. A long succession of disasters had already broken down the outworks of the continental thrones. The renown of the great armies of Germany was lost; the discipline of the Prussian, and the steady intrepidity of the Austrian, had been swept before the wild disorder of the French. Men began to believe that the great art of war was hitherto unknown, and that the enemy had at length mastered the exclusive secret. Monarchy came to be regarded as only another name for weakness, and civilized order for national decrepitude. The struggles of opposition grew more resolute as its hope of success came nearer; and the government began to feel the effects of this perpetual assault in the sudden neutrality of some of its most ostentatious champions, and in the general reserve of its supporters in the House. Even the stern perseverance of Pitt was beginning to be weary of a contest in which victory lost its fruits on the one side, while defeat seemed only to give fresh vigour on the other.

I was returning one morning from the House, after a night spent in a fierce debate on the war, which Fox denounced with an asperity unusual to his generous temperament. The premier had made a powerful appeal, vindicating the government from all share in the continental misfortunes; pronouncing loftily, that in a war not made for conquest, it was sophistry to speak of our failure of possession as a crime; and declaring, in a tone of singular boldness and energy, that if the Continent were untrod by a British soldier, there was a still broader field for the arms and the triumphs of England. But his eloquence had more effect in exposing the errors than in reducing the numbers of his opponents, and the smallness of his majority would have made a feebler spirit resign on the spot. The announcement of the numbers was received with an in-

sulting cheer by the minority, and the cabinet was already by anticipation in their hands.

I left the House wearied and dejected, and was returning to Downing-street to throw myself on a couch and get a few hours of rest before my morning toil, when I found a messenger at the door of my office with a request from the secretary of state that I should attend him as soon as possible. I found my friend before a table covered with despatches, his brow furrowed with weariness like my own.

"You see me here, Marston, more tired than any ploughman or watchman, or any other son of labour from this to John o'Groat's house. I was sent for, from the House, six hours ago, and every hour since have I been poring over those puzzled papers."

I offered to give him such assistance at the time as was in my power.

"No, no, sir; I am chained to the oar for to-night at least, and must pull till I fall asleep. My purpose in keeping you from your pillow at this hour is not to relieve myself from trouble, but to ask whether you are disposed to relieve the government from a serious difficulty, and in a way which I hope will be not disagreeable to yourself."

I looked all astonishment. He interpreted my look, and said, "To solve the enigma at once, it is our wish to send you to Ireland. The danger is there."

I listened in silence while he went into a long detail of the hazard of the island, arising from the interests of a powerful republican party, who, inflamed by the successes of France, were preparing to receive troops and arms from the Republic. He finished by saying, in a tone of compliment, which, from him, was as unusual as I believe it was sincere, that my exertions in the House had attracted consideration in the highest quarter, and that I had been proposed in that quarter for the chief-secretaryship of Ireland. He added that the premier had assented to the appointment at once; and here," said he, "is the warrant which I have prepared in anticipation of its acceptance. You are, from this moment, the virtual viceroy of Ireland."

This was unexpected elevation! I had at once surmounted all the slow gradations of office; the broadest prospect of official ambition was suddenly opened before

me; popularity, founded on the most solid grounds, was now waiting only my acceptance; the sense of power, always dear to the heart of man, was offered its full gratification.

"How long will it take you to prepare for the journey?" asked the minister.

"Half an hour," was my reply.

"Bravo! Marston. I see that your campaigning has not been thrown away upon you. You have the soldier's promptitude. We were prepared to allow you a week. But the sooner you set off the better. The truth is," said he, rising, "we feel great difficulties in that quarter. The most thoroughly English portion of the island is at this moment the most disturbed. There are drillings, purchases of arms, midnight musterings, and even something not far from prepared attacks upon the king's troops. The papers among which you found me contain a regular, and a very complete, organization of an insurrectionary government. You will require all the energy of the soldier, and all the prudence of the statesman."

"Let me add to them," said I, "what is essential to the success of both, in a country of generous hearts and quick conceptions—the sincerity of a patriot."

Before that evening closed I was a hundred miles on my way to the Irish capital. A rapid journey, and a tranquil passage over the sixty miles of sea that lie between Wales and Ireland, gave me what an old Roman would regard as an omen of the peacefulness and success of my mission.

On the dawn of one of the finest mornings of the year, I came within sight of the Irish shore, and was struck, as all travellers have been, by the beauty of the bold and picturesque coast which rose from the waters before me. On one side the eye glanced over a vast sheet of water shut in by headlands, and as blue and bright as a lake under an Italian sky. At the extremity of this noble estuary, a cloud, unchanging and unmoving, showed where a city sent up the smoke of its ten thousand fires: there lay the capital.

My official rank threw open the *élite* of Irish society to me at my first step; and I found it, as it has been found

by every one else, animated, graceful, and hospitable. Even the nature of its government tended to those qualifications. While the grave business of the state was done in London, the lighter business of public life was sedulously sustained in the Irish capital. The lord-lieutenant was generally a nobleman selected more for his rank and wealth than for his statesmanship. A rich, showy, and good-humoured peer was then the true man for the head of affairs in Ireland. It was of more importance that he should give balls and suppers, say lively things to the ladies, and be jocular with the gentlemen, than that he should have the brains of Bolingbroke or the tongue of Chatham. But the position of the secretary was the antipodes of this tranquil and festive sinecure. He was in Ireland what the premier was in England, but with ten times more of the difficulty, and ten times less of the power. The whole conduct of public affairs lay on his shoulders; he was responsible for everything, while he was free in nothing; he was perpetually assailed by opposition for measures which he was not at liberty to explain, and placed between the English cabinet and the Irish party, as a scapegoat for the mistakes of the one, and a target for the shot of the other. But his chief trial of temper was in the House of Commons. Opposition in Ireland never exhibited a list of more remarkable names.

I was fortunately free from the entanglements of that question which has since formed so large a portion of the political disquietudes of Irish debate. The religion of the south was not yet among parliamentary topics. The religion of the north, active, ardent, and indefatigable, was our most restless theme; and the political theories which seemed to grow out of its bold abstractions kept the government in perpetual anxiety. The whole northern portion of the island was ripe for revolt. America had blown the hot-blast of the revolutionary furnace across the Atlantic, and a spark from France would have now ignited the whole moral surface of the soil.

One of my first acts, after arranging the preliminary business of office, was to make a flying tour through Ulster. I was astonished at its beauty. Even after being familiar with the loveliness of the English landscape, I was in a

state of continual surprise at the variety, richness, and singularity of nature in the northern counties. Mountain, lake, stately bay, and broad river followed each other in noble and unceasing succession. I was still more struck with the skill and good fortune by which the people had contrived to combine the industry of manufactures with the life of the fields,—a problem which England herself had failed to solve. Unhappily, the politics of France had made their way through a large portion of the province, and the glories of a republic "loomed large" before the popular eye.

As it was my purpose to see all that I could with my own eyes, I mingled largely in society, made no distinction between honourable men of different political creeds, enjoyed on one day the stag-hunt and claret of the noble Whig, and on the next the stag-hunt and claret of the noble Tory, listened to all, laughed with all, and learned something from all. With the people I was half a son of Ireland already, and I regarded the recognition as the pledge of my success.

"Do you know," said one of the most influential and accomplished noblemen of the country to me one day at his sumptuous table, "how many of the lords-lieutenant have left a popular recollection behind them?"

I professed my ignorance, but enumerated some names remarkable for intelligence and vigour of administration.

"Oh," said my entertainer, "that was not the question! Well, I shall tell you. *Two*, and no more."

I begged to know the names of those "discoverers of the grand secret, the philosopher's stone of popularity, the alchemists who had power to fix the floating essence of the Irish mind!"

"Chesterfield and Townshend. Chesterfield, regarded as a fop in England, was a daring, steady, and subtle governor of the unruly spirits of Ireland, in one of its most hazardous periods. That the throne of the Brunswicks did not see an Irish revolt, at the moment when it saw a Scottish invasion, was the service of Chesterfield. But he ruled less by his wisdom than by his wit. He broke down faction by *bon-mots;* he extinguished conspiracy by happy compliments, administered the sternest law with the

most polished smile, and cut down rebellion by quotations from La Fontaine, and *calembourgs* from Scarron. Still, with those fortunate pleasantries he combined public and solid services. Among the rest he threw a large portion of the crown lands into a park for the popular recreation, and thus gave one of the earliest examples of regard for the health and enjoyment of the citizens: a more enduring monument of his statesmanship could not have been offered to the gratitude of the country. Townshend was one of those singular men who possess faculties of which they have no knowledge until the moment when they become necessary. He began life as a soldier, and finished his soldiership in sharing the most important victory of his day, the battle of Quebec. On his appointment to the vice-royalty he found his government a chaos, a government faction superseding the governor, and an opposition faction engrossing the people. He now, for the first time, became a politician. He resolved to crush both, and he succeeded. He treated the government faction in Ireland with contumely, and he treated the opposition with contempt. Both deserved the treatment. Both were indignant; he laughed at both, and treated them with still deeper scorn. Both were astonished—the government faction intrigued against him in England, the opposition threatened impeachment. He defied them still more haughtily. They at length found that he was not to be shaken, and both submitted. The nation joined him and was pacified, grew in vigour as it grew in tranquillity; and in that tranquillity you have the secret of all the privileges which Ireland has ever obtained. Townshend had performed, only on a smaller scale, the same national service which Pitt afterwards performed in England. He took the people out of the hands of party, broke up the league of faction, and gave the island that freedom which the great minister of England gave to the empire. For this the name of Townshend lives among us still."

The evening of this hospitable day concluded with a ball to the neighbouring families, and all was graceful and animated enjoyment. My host was an accomplished classical scholar,—a quality which I found, in some degree, fashionable among the leading personages of the time, and

which unquestionably added much to the high tone of conversation among the parliamentary circles. In his stately mansion an artist might have found studies, a scholar learning, a philosopher wisdom, and a man of the world all the charms of polished life.

Our mornings were chiefly spent in hunting over the fine landscape which spread, in all the various beauty of cultivation, within view of the mansion. On one of those days the observation of the field was caught by the fierce riding of a singular-looking man, scarcely above the peasant in his general appearance, and yet mounted on one of the finest English hunters that I had ever seen. He rode at everything, managed his horse with practised skill, and soon became an object of general emulation. To "ride up" to the "wild huntsman," was found to be a task not easily accomplished, and at length all was a trial of speed with this dashing exhibitor. A glance which, when on the point of one of his most desperate leaps, he threw back at me, seemed a kind of personal challenge, and I rushed on at speed.

The Irish hunter is matchless at "topping" stone walls, but his practice has not lain much among rivers; and the English horse is sometimes his master at the deep and rapid streams which, running between crumbling banks, are perhaps the severest trials to both horse and rider. The majority of the hunt pulled up at the edge of one of those formidable chasms, and I was by no means unwilling to follow their example; but the look of the stranger had a sneer along with it, which put me on my mettle, and I dashed after him. The hounds had scrambled through, and we rode nearly abreast through a broken country, that mixture of bog and firm ground which occurs frequently in newly-cleared land, and over which nothing but the most powerful sinews can make way. We had now left every one behind us, and were struggling on through the dimness of a hazy day sinking into twilight. Suddenly my mysterious rival turned his horse full upon me, and to my utter amazement, discharged a pistol at my head.

The discharge was so close that I escaped only by the swerving of my horse at the flash. I felt my face burn, and in the impulse of the pain made a blind blow at him

with my whip. He had drawn out another pistol in an instant, which the blow luckily dashed out of his hand. No words passed between us, but I made a bound to seize him. He slipped away from my grasp, and, striking in the spur, galloped furiously forward, I in pursuit. The twilight had now deepened, and he plunged into a lane bounded on both sides by steep hedges, and which, from some former hunting in this quarter, I knew to be a *cul-de-sac*. This doubled my determination to make myself master of the assassin; for even in the hurry of the moment I had formed some conception of my having seen his face before, and that the attempt to put me out of the way was connected, in some way or other, with public affairs.

The question was soon decided. He reached the end of the lane, which was shut in with a wall of about the height of a man. His horse shied at the obstacle. The rider, with an oath and a desperate exertion, pushed him at it again. I was now within a few yards of him, and arrived only in time to see the animal make a convulsive spring, touch with his hinder feet on the top of the wall, and roll over. My Irish horse cleared it in the native style, and I found my enemy crushed under his hunter, and evidently in the pangs of death. He had been flung on a heap of stones, and the weight of the falling horse had broken his spine. I poured some brandy down his throat, relieved him from the encumbrance of the hunter, and attempted to give him hope. But he told me "that it was useless; that he felt death coming on, and that I was the last man who should wish him to live,—he had pledged himself to my extinction."

After a brief period of those terrible disclosures, his pains suddenly ceased, his mind grew clear, and he acknowledged that he was one of the leading agents in a national conspiracy to republicanize Ireland. "You are too kind," said he, "to one who now sees the madness of the whole design, and is sensible of the guilt of taking away the lives of honourable men." A lapse of weakness here tied his tongue; and I brought him a draught of water from a spring which gurgled beside the wall. He thanked me, and proceeded to say that my "character for vilance and activity had alarmed the principal conspira-

tors, and that he, thinking all crimes meritorious in a popular cause, had resolved to signalize the commencement of his services by putting the English secretary to death on the first occasion."

For this purpose he had pursued my steps for some time in the metropolis, but without finding a fitting opportunity.

He had at last determined to give up the object as altogether hopeless, and was already prepared to act on a bolder scale by heading open rebellion, when he heard of my intending to hunt on this day. It was to be his last experiment; "and how rejoiced I am," said he, "that it has failed!" He now remained for a while in apparent meditation, and then, suddenly raising himself on his arm, said, in a calm and manly tone—"One thing I still can do in this world, if it may not be too late. Leave me here—I must die;—go back in all haste to your friends, and tell them to prepare either to fly or to defend their lives. This is the night appointed for the insurrection. Fifty thousand men are armed in the mountains, and ready for the signal to march on the principal towns. The few troops in the country are to be made prisoners in their barracks. The government stores are to be divided among the people. Before twelve hours are over we shall have a force of a hundred thousand men on foot, and a republic will be proclaimed."

The intelligence was startling, though not wholly unexpected. I demanded the names of the leaders; but on that head he refused to make any answer. I next inquired whether the rebel directory had any hope of assistance from the Continent. "That I can fully answer," said he, now almost at his last gasp; "for I myself was the negotiator. It is but a month since I was in Paris. The government agreed to send twenty sail of the line, with ten thousand troops, and Hoche, the favourite general of the Republic, to the north, or, in case of unexpected obstacles, to the south of Ireland. I have been looking out for their flag from hour to hour." The man sank back on the ground. I prepared to seek for help, if there were any to be found near that desolate place. He grasped my hand; his was icy. "No," said he, "I must now be left alone; I am dying—and I am not sorry to die. I am free

your blood, and I shall escape the horrors which I see at hand. Men in health, and men dying, think differently of those things. Farewell!" He gave my hand a convulsive clasp, and expired.

My situation was now an anxious one. Night had fallen, and the hour was full of peril to those whom I had left behind; it was even possible that the insurrection might have already broken out. Sounds which seemed to me, in the stillness of the hour, to be the signals of the peasantry—the echoes of horns, and the trampling of bodies of horse—began to rise upon the gust; and yet I was unwilling to leave my unfortunate victim on the ground. At length a loud shout, and the firing of musketry, on the skirts of the wood, awoke me to a sense of the real danger of my situation. I forced my way through the thickets, and saw a skirmish between a large mass of armed men and a picket of troops in a village on the borders of the grove. There was now no time to be lost. I returned to the spot where the body lay, placed my hand on its forehead to ascertain whether any remnant of life lingered there, found all cold, and remounting my horse, speeded my dreary and difficult way back to the mansion.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

To my surprise I found the windows blazing with lights, carriages arriving, and all the signs of a night of gala. I had forgotten that this was my noble entertainer's birthday, and that the whole circle of the neighbouring nobles and gentlemen had been for the last month invited. There were to be private theatricals, followed by a ball and supper. The whole country continued to pour in. Full of my disastrous intelligence, my first inquiry was for the noble host, but he was not to be seen. I was at length informed, under the seal of secresy, by his secretary, that, some information of popular movements within a few miles having been conveyed to him late in the day, he had put himself at the head of a squadron of his yeomanry, to ascertain the nature of the disturbance; and, as it was then too late to countermand the invitations to the ball, he had given strict orders

that the cause of his absence should be concealed, and that the entertainments should go on as if he were present.

As the hour waned, the inquiries became more urgent, the dance languished, and the showy crowd, forming into groups and wandering through the saloons, or gathered to the windows, had evidently lost all the spirit of festivity. To my astonishment, strong opinions began to find utterance; and I discovered that his lordship, in his general and lofty disregard of the shades of popular sentiment, had among his guests some individuals whose rank and wealth had not preserved them from the taint of republicanism. As it was not my purpose to make a ball-room the scene of a political squabble, and as I felt it due to my official position to avoid any unnecessary entanglement in the obscure follies of provincial partisanship, I at first tried to laugh down the topic. But a young orator, a heated and fluent enthusiast, recently returned from a continental excursion, gave so stirring a picture of the glories of French independence, and the glittering advantages which must accrue to all countries following the example, that I was forced to stand on my defence. Our dispute attracted general notice. He answered with vehement and elaborate detail. I had evidently the majority on my side; but many adhered to him, and those, too, men of consequence, and of obvious determination.

The ladies shrank affrighted as the contest grew more angry; and the usual and unhappy result of political discussion in Ireland, an exchange of cards, was about to take place, when one of the servants brought me a small packet of papers which had been found on the body of the assassin. Glancing over them, I saw a list of the leaders of the insurrection, and the first name in the paper that of my antagonist. I crushed the document in my hand, and beckoned him to a window. There, alone, and out of hearing of the guests, who however followed us anxiously with their eyes, I charged him with his guilt. He denied it fiercely. I gave him five minutes to consider whether he would confess, or abide the consequences. His countenance visibly exhibited the perturbation of his mind. I again warned him to make his peace in time with the government, by a solemn abjuration of his design.

I have the whole scene before me still. This man was destined to a memorable, and a melancholy, fate. I never remember a countenance more expressive of intellectual refinement; but there was a look of strange and feverish restlessness in his large deep-seated eye, almost ominous of his future career. He was still young, though he had already gone through vicissitudes enough to darken the longest life. He had been, a few years before, called to the bar, the favourite profession of the Irish gentry, where he had exhibited talents of a remarkable order; but an impatience of the slow success of his profession drove him to the hazards of political change. He had married, and thus increased his difficulties, until party came athwart him with its promises of boundless honour and rapid fortune.

He had but now returned from France, with a commission in the army of the Republic, and a plan agreed on with the Directory for the invasion of Ireland; but those were discoveries to be made hereafter. On this night I saw nothing but a gallant enthusiast, filled with classic recollections, inflamed with the ardour of conscious ability, and deluded by dreams of political perfection. My sense of the utter ruin which he was preparing for himself was so strong that I pressed him from point to point, until he was forced to take refuge in flight, and, darting from me, burst open a door which led to the demesne. While I paused, not unwilling to give him the opportunity to escape, I heard a wild burst of wailing, and a confusion of voices outside. At the next moment I saw the fugitive return, with a tottering step, a bloodless countenance, and a look of horror. Without a word he pointed to the door; I followed the direction, and saw what well might justify his feelings. The troop of yeomanry had been attacked on their return from patrolling the country; an ambuscade had been laid for them by a large force of the insurgents, in one of the narrow roads which bordered the demesne; and where, from its vicinity, they had imagined themselves secure. As they moved down this defile, with their noble commandant at their head, a heavy fire of musketry assailed them from both sides; and as the assailants were unapproachable, they had no resource but to gallop on. But they had no sooner reached the wider part of the road than they found themselves fired on again from behind a barri-

cade of carts and wagons drawn across the road. The affair now seemed desperate; the muzzles of the muskets almost touched their breasts, and every shot told. Their pistols could keep up only a random fire, and their sabres were wholly useless. They were now falling helplessly and fast, when the earl ordered them to charge the insurgents in front, and force their way over the barricade at all risks. He bravely led the way, and they burst through, under a volley from the rebels. A ball fatally struck him as he was in the act of cheering on his men, and he dropped dead from his horse without a groan. The troop, furious at their loss, had inflicted a desperate slaughter, cleared the road, and had now brought the dead body of their lord to that mansion where he had so long presided as the example of every high-toned quality, and which his fate was now to turn into a scene of terror and woe.

The melancholy tidings could no longer be suppressed, and the ball-room was filled with screams and faintings. The corpse was brought in, borne on the arms of the yeomanry, most of them wounded, and looking ghastly from loss of blood and the agitation of the encounter. The guests crowded round the sofa on which the body was laid, with all the varieties of sorrow and strong emotion conceivable, under the loss of a common and honoured friend. Tears fell down many a manly cheek; sobs were heard on every side, mingled with outcries of indignation against the rebellious spirit by which so deep a calamity had been produced. But all other considerations were quickly absorbed in the sense of general danger. A tremendous shout was heard round the mansion, followed by the discharge of musketry and the clashing of pikes. All rushed to the windows, and we saw the hills in a blaze with fires, and the country crowded with the armed force of the insurrection.

The insurrection had broken out; there could now be no scepticism on the subject. Some hundreds of the insurgents were already filling the grounds in front of the mansion, and, from the shouts which rose in every quarter, and still more from the fires which blazed on every hill round the horizon, the numbers of the insurgents must have amounted to thousands. It was evident that we were in a pitfall, and that resistance was only the protraction of a fate which was

now inevitable. The shrieks of the females, and the despondency of the men, who naturally thought that their last hour was come, were enough to dishearten all resolution. For a few minutes the only orders which I could give were to bar the doors and close the windows. The multitude, new to hostile enterprises, had till now kept at some distance, warned by their losses in the skirmish with the yeomanry, and probably expecting the arrival of troops. But the sight of our precautions, few and feeble as they were, gave them new courage; and discharges of musketry began to drop their bullets into the midst of our startled assemblage. The short interval now allowed to us was employed in barricading the mansion, which was built almost with the strength of a fortress, and posting every man who could handle a musket or pistol at the windows.

Still I knew that this species of defence could not last long; and my only hope for our lives was, that the firing might bring some of the troops who patrolled the country to our assistance. But the discharges became closer and heavier, and yet no sound of succour was to be heard. My situation became more anxious every moment: all looked up to me for their guidance; and though my garrison were brave and obedient, as became the high-spirited sons of Ireland, there seemed the strongest probability that the night would end in a general massacre. But there was no faint-heartedness under our roof; our fire was stoutly kept up whenever the assailants came within range; and as I hurried from chamber to chamber, to ascertain the condition of our defence and gave directions, I found all firm.

But a new danger awaited us; a succession of shrieks from one of the upper apartments caught my ear, and, on hurrying to the spot and forcing my way through a crowd of women half frantic with terror, I saw some of the outbuildings, immediately connected with the mansion, wrapt in a sheet of fire. The insurgents had at last found out the true way to subdue our resistance; and we obviously had no alternative but to throw ourselves on their mercy, or die with arms in our hands. Yet to surrender was perhaps only to suffer a more protracted death, degraded by shame; and when I gave a glance on the helplessness of the noble and beautiful women around me, and thought of the agony

which must be felt by us on seeing them thrown into the power of the assassins who were now roaring with triumph and vengeance, I dismissed all thoughts of submission at once, and determined to take the chances of resistance while any man among us had the power to draw a trigger.

In rushing through the mansion, to make its defenders in the front aware of the new misfortune which threatened us, I happened to pass through the ball-room, where the corpse of its noble and brave master lay. One figure was standing there, with his back turned to me and evidently gazing on the body. All else was solitary. Of all the friends, guests, and domestics, not one had remained. But loud as were the shouts outside, and constant as was the crashing of musketry, I could hear a groan which seemed to come from the very heart of that lonely bystander. I sprang towards him; he turned at the sound of my step, and, to my surprise, I saw the face of the man whose share in the insurrection I had so singularly ascertained. I had a loaded musket in my hand, and my first impulse, in the indignation of the moment, was to discharge its contents through his heart. But he looked at me with a countenance of such utter dejection, that I droped its muzzle to the ground, and demanded "what had brought him there, and at such a time?" "This!" he exclaimed, pointing to the pallid form on the sofa. "To that man I owed everything. To his protection, to his generosity, to his nobleness of heart, I owed my education, my hopes, all my prospects in life. I should have died a thousand deaths rather than see a hair of his head touched—and now there he lies." He sank upon his knees, took the hand of the dead, and wept over it in agony.

But I had no leisure to wait upon his remorse. "You are at my mercy," said I. "I might justly put you to death at the instant, as a rebel in the fact; or I might deliver you up to the law, when your fate would be inevitable. I can make no compromise. But if you would make such atonement to your own conscience as may be found in undoing a part of the desperate work which you have done, go out to those robbers and murderers who are now thirsting for our blood, and put a stop to their atrocities, if you can; save

the lives of those in the house; or, if you cannot, die in the only attempt which can retrieve your memory."

He looked at me with a lack-lustre eye for a moment, and uttered a few wild words, as if his mind was wandering. I sternly repeated my demand, and at length he agreed to try his influence with the multitude. I threw open the door, and sent him out, adding the words—"I shall have my eye upon you. If I find you swerve, I shall fire at you in preference to any other man in the mob. We shall die together." He went forth, and I heard his recognition by the rebels in their loud shouts and their heavier fire against our feeble defences. But after a few moments, the shouting and the fire ceased together. There was a pause—from its strangeness after the tumult of the last hour, scarcely less startling than the uproar. They appeared to be deliberating on his proposition. But while we remained in this suspense, another change came; loud altercations were heard; and the pause was interrupted by a renewed rush to the assault. We now looked upon all as hopeless, and expected only to perish in the flames, which were rolling in broad sheets over the roof of the mansion. There was no symptom of faint-heartedness among us; but our ammunition was almost exhausted, and every countenance was pale with despair; another half-hour, and our fate must be decided.

In this extremity, with every sense wound up to its utmost pitch, I thought that I heard the distant trampling of cavalry. It came nearer still. There was evident confusion among the rebels. At length a trumpet sounded the charge, and a squadron of horse burst into the lawn, sabreing and firing among the multitude. The struggle was fierce, but brief; and before we could unbar the doors, and pour out to take part in the *mêlée*, all was done: the rebels had fled, the grounds were cleared, and the dragoons were gathering their prisoners.

All was now congratulation; and I received thanks from gallant lips, and from bright eyes, which might have flattered one fonder of flattery. All imputed their safety to the address with which I had employed the feelings of the rebel leader. "But for the pause produced by his presence, all must have perished." It had given time for the cavalry to come up. An aide-de-camp of the viceroy had been sent in

search of me with despatches; the officer in command at the next town had persuaded him, much against his will, to take as his escort one of the night patrols of horse; and thus were saved a hundred and fifty lives of the first personages of the province. By morning the mansion and all within it would probably have been embers.

I determined on returning to the metropolis without delay. I had no sooner expressed my intention than I was assailed on all hands with advice, and even with entreaties, to postpone my journey until the flight of the rebels was fully ascertained, or at least till daylight gave me a better chance of personal safety. But every moment now seemed to me more precious than the last; and breaking through a circle of the noble and the fair, I threw myself on my horse, and, with the aide-de-camp and a couple of dragoons for my escort, soon left the whole scene of entreaty and terror, sorrow and triumph, behind.

Within a few hours after my arrival, the privy council assembled. My intelligence was received as it deserved; it decided the wavering, gave increased determination to the bold.

CHAPTER XXXV.

But there was one man among them who would have distinguished himself in any council upon earth. He was a lawyer, and holding the highest office of his profession. Yet his ambition was still higher than his office, and his ability was equal to his ambition. Bold by nature, and rendered bolder by the constant success of his career, he would have been a matchless minister in a Continental government. Living under the old *régime* of France, the laurels of a Richelieu or a Mazarin might have found a formidable competitor in this man of daring and decision. He wanted but their scale of action to have exhibited all their virtues, and perhaps all their vices.

At the bar his career had been one of unexampled rapidity. He had scarcely appeared when he burst through the crowd, and took the rank to which all the dignities of the profession seem the natural inheritance. He had

scarcely set his foot on the floor before he overtopped the bench. But the courts of justice were too narrow for him. It was in parliament that he found the true atmosphere for his loftiness of flight and keenness of vision.

At that time the study of public speaking had become a fashion, and the genius of the country, singularly excitable, always ardent, and always making its noblest efforts under the spell of public display, exhibited the most brilliant proofs of its title to popularity. But, in the very blaze of those triumphs, the Attorney-General showed that there were other weapons of public warfare not less original and not less triumphant. No orator, and even no rhetorician, he seemed to despise alike the lustre of imagination and the graces of language. But he substituted a force that often obtained the victory over both. Abrupt, bold, and scornful, his words struck home. He had all the power of plain things.

But to this natural faculty of debate he added remarkable knowledge of public life, high legal repute, and the incomparable advantage of his early training in a profession which singularly searches the recesses of the soul, habitually forces imposture into light, and cross-examines the villain into reluctant veracity. There never was in parliament a more remorseless or a more effectual hand in stripping off the tinsel of political pretension. His logic was contemptuous, and his contempt was logical. His blows were all straightforward. He wasted no time in the flourish of the sword; he struck with the point. Even to the most powerful of his opponents, this assault was formidable. But, with the inferior ranks of opposition, he threw aside the sword and assumed the axe. Obviously regarding them as criminals against common sense and national polity, he treated them as the executioner might treat culprits already bound to the wheel, measuring the place for his blows with the professional eye, and crushing limb after limb at his leisure.

In the House of Lords, as chancellor, he instantly became the virtual viceroy. It is true that a succession of opulent and accomplished noblemen, every two or three years, were transmitted from Whitehall to the Castle, to allow themselves upon a splendid sinecure, rehearse an

annual king's speech, exhibit the acknowledged elegance of noble English life, and, having given the destined number of balls and suppers, await the warrant of a secretary of state's letter to terminate their political existence. But the chancellor was made of "sterner stuff." His material was not soluble by a blast of ministerial breath. Not even the giant grasp of Pitt would have dared to pluck the sceptre from his hand. If struck, he might have answered the blow as the flint answers—by fire. But the premier had higher reasons for leaving him in possession of power;—he was pure. He loved power, as all men do who are worthy of it. He disdained wealth, as all men do who are fitted for its use. He scorned the popularity of the day, as all men must who know the essential baseness of its purchase; and, aspiring after a name in the annals of his country, like all men to whom it is due, like them he proudly left the debt to be discharged by posterity.

The chancellor was not without his faults. His scorn was too palpable. He despised too many, and the many too much. His haughtiness converted the perishable and purchasable malice of party into the "study of revenge, immortal hate." When he struck down an opponent in the fair strife of parliament, his scorn was like poison in the wound, and the blow was never forgotten but in the grave.

At length a time of desperate trial arose. The rebellion of 1798 burst out. He had foreseen it. But the men of the Castle, lolling on their couches, would not believe in its possibility. The men of the populace stirring up the rabble with the point of the dagger, derided him as a libeller of the people; and even the government of England —too anxiously engaged in watching the movements of the French legions from the heights of Dover to have time for a glance at disturbers behind the Irish Channel—for a time left him to his fate. But he was equal to the emergency. He had been scoffingly called "the Cassandra of the aristocracy," but he had neither the fortunes nor the failures of a Cassandra; he had not forfeited his virtues for his gift, and his prophecy was too soon and too terribly realized to be disbelieved.

It is the natural fate of such men, in such times, to be

misunderstood and to be maligned. The libel which cast every stone within its reach at his living name long continued to heap them on his grave. But all this has passed away, and the manlier portion of his countrymen now appeal to the administration of the "Great Chancellor" as proof of the national capacity for the highest trusts of empire.

I am not writing a panegyric. He had his infirmities; his temper was too excitable, and his measures were too prompt for prudence. But his heart was sound, and his genius was made for the guidance of the state in the hour of its danger. If a feebler mind had then presided in the public councils, Ireland, within a twelvemonth, would have been a republic, and in every hour since would have been agonizing under the daggers of rival factions, or paying the fearful price of her frenzy in indissoluble chains.

If this were the single act of his life, it was sufficient for his fame. It is enough to inscribe on the mausoleum of any man that "he rescued his country from a democracy!"

The first news of the revolt which reached England produced a formidable effect on the legislature. Even the sagacity of the premier had been deceived, and his cabinet evidently staggered from the effect of the surprise. Opposition had been equally startled, and were still more perplexed in their decision. But the tremendous novelty of revolt was now at their doors. Whether the Irish revolters acted in concert with the undying hostility of France, or with the factious reform of England, the danger in either case assumed a shape of the most appalling magnitude. Opposition, in the very prospect of power, now shrank from possession, as the stormers of a fortress might start back when they saw the walls rolling down before them in some sudden convulsion of nature.

Pitt was soon equal to the crisis. The orders which he despatched to Ireland were stamped with all the considerate vigour of his matchless ability. I had sent him all the information which could be obtained of the progress and purposes of the revolt, with the suggestions arising from the contingency. His remarks on my communication were brief, but incomparably clear, direct, and decided. Their tenour was, that I should distinguish accurately

between the deluded and the deluders—that I should assure the loyal of the unhesitating support of England—and that, in all instances, I should cultivate the national loyalty, reward the generous obedience, and sympathize with all the gallant and high-toned qualities of a people with whom everything was to be done by taking an interest in their feelings. These principles were so entirely my own that I acted upon them with double zeal, and with consequent success. The loyalty of Ireland rapidly exhibited itself in the most willing sacrifices; all ranks of opinion coincided in the necessity of bold and instant action; and from day to day, party, absorbed in the sense of the national exigency, disappeared.

The leading men on both sides of the House ranged themselves in the ranks of the voluntary corps which came forward to assist in the public defence, and the fine metaphor which had once made the senate thunder with applause —"The serpent's teeth, sown in the ground, sprung up armed men,"—was now amply, but more fortunately, realized.

"Happy," says the French wit, "the land which has nothing for history." This happiness has never belonged to Ireland. Her annals are a stern romance. But the period of which I speak exhibited her senatorial strength with an energy almost compensating for her popular misfortunes. While parliament in England languished, parliament in Ireland started into sudden power. It was aroused by the visible presence of the public peril. Ireland was the out-post, while England was the camp; there the struggle was at its height, while the great English brigade moved up slowly from the rear. The ardour and activity of the national temperament were exercised in perpetual conflict, and every conflict produced some new champion.

The actual construction of the senate-house stimulated the national propensity for display. The House of Commons was an immense circular hall, surmounted with a lofty dome. A gallery supported by columns was formed round the base of the dome, with seats for seven hundred persons, but on crowded occasions capable of containing more; the whole highly ornamented, and constituting a rotunda, uniting grandeur with remarkable architectural elegance. Thus every member acted in the sight of a large audience,

however thin might be the assemblage below; for the curiosity attached to the debates was so powerful that the spacious gallery was always full. But the nature of that audience offered the still stronger temptation to the bold extravagances of the Irish temperament.

What must be the condition of a minister rising before such an auditory to pronounce the grave doctrines of public prudence; to oppose argument to brilliant declamation; to proclaim regulated obedience, in the midst of spirits fantastic as the winds; and to lay restraints essential to the public peace on a population proud of *their past defiances*, and ready to welcome even civil war? *I was not conscious* of any natural timidity, nor have I ever found occasion to distrust my nerve on any great demand; but I must acknowledge that when, in some of the leading debates of that most absorbing and most perilous period, I rose to take the initiative, the sight of the vast audience to whom I raised my eyes was one of the severest trials of my philosophy. The members round me excited no alarm; with them I was prepared to grapple: it was a contest of argument,—I had facts for their facts, answers for their captiousness, and a fearless tongue for their declamation. But the gallery thus filled was beyond my reach; its passions and prejudices were inaccessible to any logic of mine; and I stood before them less as in the presence of a casual auditory than of a tribunal, and at that tribunal less as an advocate than as a culprit on the point of being arraigned.

At length opposition rallied, and resolved to make a general assault upon the administration. Like their English friends, they had been stunned for a while by the suddenness of the outbreak. But, as the Turkish populace, in a conflagration or the plague, no sooner recover from their first fright than they discover the cause in the government, and march to demand the head of the vizier, the popular orators had no sooner found leisure to look round them than they marshalled their bands, and demanded the dismissal of all antagonist authority. *I* was first to be torn down. *I* stood in the gate, and while I held the keys there was no entrance for expectant ambition. *I* waved the flag in the breach, and until the banner was swept away the storm was ineffectual. Yet this flinging of the whole weight of party

vindictiveness on my head gave me a new courage,—the courage of passion, the determination which arises from a sense of injury, and the vigour which grows with the magnitude of the trial. In other times I might have abandoned the struggle; but, with the eyes of a nation thus brought upon me, and all the ablest men of the opposite benches making my overthrow the very prize of victory, I determined "to stand the hazard of the die."

The eventful night came at last. For days before, every organ of public opinion was in the most feverish activity; lampoons, pamphlets, and letters to the leading journals, the whole machinery of the paragraph world, was in full work round me; and even the administration despaired of my being able to resist the uproar—all but one, and that one the noblest and the most gifted of them all, my friend the chancellor. I had sat long past midnight with him on the eve of the coming struggle, and I received his full approval of my determination. He talked with all his usual loftiness, but with more than his usual feeling.

"Within the next twenty-four hours," said he, "your fate will be decided. But, in public life, the event is not the dishonour; it is the countenance with which we meet it that makes all the difference between success and shame. If you fall, you will fall like a man of character. If you triumph, your success will be unalloyed by any baseness of purchase."

Still the crisis was a trying one, and my occupation during the day was but little calculated to smooth its anxieties. The intelligence from the country announced the increased extent of the revolt, and the intercepted correspondence gave startling proof of an organization altogether superior to the rude tumults of an angry peasantry. Several sharp encounters had taken place with the soldiery, and in some of them the troops, scattered in small detachments and unprepared, had suffered losses. Insurrectionary proclamations had been issued, and the revolt was already assuming a military form; camps were collected on the mountains, and the arming of the population was become general. My day was occupied in writing hurried despatches to the magistrates and officers in command of the disturbed districts, until the moment when the debate was expected to begin.

On my way to the House, everything round me conspired to make a gloomy impression on my mind, weary and dark as it was already. Public alarm was at its height, and the city, with the usual exaggerations of undefined danger, presented the appearance of a place about to be taken by storm. The streets were crowded with people hurrying in search of news, or gathered in groups retailing what they had obtained. The armed yeomanry were hurrying to their stations for the night, patrols of cavalry were moving out to scour the environs, and the carriages of the gentry from the adjoining counties were driving to the hotels, crowded with children and domestics; while wagons loaded with the furniture of families resident in the metropolis were making their way for security into the country. All was confusion, hurry, and consternation. The look of a great city in alarm is absolutely inconceivable but by those who have been on the spot. It singularly harassed and disturbed me; and at length, for the purpose of escaping the whole sight and sensation together, I turned from the spacious range of streets which led to the House, and made my way along one of the narrow and obscure lanes which, by a libel on the national taste, were still suffered to remain in the vicinity of an edifice worthy of the days of imperial Rome.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

My choice was an unlucky one, for I had scarcely gone a hundred yards when I found my passage obstructed by a crowd evidently waiting with some sinister purpose. A signal was given, and I was called on to answer. I had no answer to make, but required that I should be suffered to pass on. "A spy, a spy! down with him!" was the exclamation of a dozen voices. A rush was made upon me, and, notwithstanding my struggle to break through, I was overwhelmed, grasped by the arms, and hurried into the entrance of a house in utter darkness. I expected only a dagger in my heart, and from the muttered tones and words which escaped my captors, not one of whom could I discern, I seemed evidently about to encounter the fate

of the spy which they deemed me. But, convinced that nothing was to be gained by submission, I loudly demanded by what right I was seized, declared myself a member of Parliament, and threatened them with the especial vengeance of the law for obstructing me in the performance of my duty.

This announcement evidently had its effect, at least in changing the subject of their consultation; and, after another whisper, one of their number stepped up to me, and said that I must follow him. My refusal brought the group again round me, and I was forced down the stairs, and through a succession of airless and ruined vaults, until we reached a massive door. There a signal was given, and was answered from within; but the door continued closed.

Without condescending to implore, I now strongly attempted to reason with my captors on the atrocity of offering violence to a stranger, and on the certainty that they would gain more by giving me my liberty than they possibly could by burying their knives in my bosom. But all was in vain. They made no reply. One conception alone was wanting to the torture of the time; and it came. I heard through the depth of the vaults the sound of a church clock striking "eight." It was the very hour which had been agreed on for commencing the debate of the night. What must be thought of my absence? What answer could be made to any inquiry for my presence? What conceivable refuge could my character as a minister have from the charge of scandalous neglect, or more scandalous pusillanimity; from treachery to my friends, or from an utter insensibility to personal honour and official duty in myself? The thought had nearly deprived me of my senses. The perspiration of mental torment ran down my face. I stamped the ground, and would have dashed my forehead against the wall had not the whole group instantly clung round me. A few moments more of this wretchedness, and I must have died; but the door at length was cautiously opened. I saw lights and human beings, and I bounded in.

At a long narrow table, on which were a few lights and everal books and rolls of paper, sat about twen men

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evidently of the lower order, though one or two exhibited a marked superiority to the rest. A case of pistols lay on the table, which had probably been brought out on the signal of my arrival, and in the corners of the room, or rather vault, were several muskets and other weapons piled against the wall. From the obvious disturbance of the meeting, I was clearly an unwelcome guest; and, after a general sweep of the papers off the table, and a whisper which communicated to the chairman the circumstances of my capture, I was asked my name, and why I had intruded on their meeting. To the latter question my reply was an indignant demand why my liberty had been infringed on. To the former I gave my name and office at full length, and in a tone of authority. No announcement could have been more startling. The president actually sprang from his chair; others plucked out knives and pistols; all looked pallid and thunderstruck. With the first minister of the realm in this cavern of conspirators, every life of whom was in the peril of the axe; my presence among them was like the dropping of a shell into a powder-magazine.

But the dismay soon passed; their native daring returned, and I saw that my fate hung once more on the balance. After a brief consultation, and many a gloomy glance at their prisoner, the president summed up the opinion of the board. "You must be sensible, sir," said he, addressing me, "that in times like the present every man must be prepared to make sacrifices for his cause. The call of Ireland has summoned us here—that call is irresistible; and whatever may be our feelings for you, sir, who have been brought into this place wholly without our desire, the interests of a great country determined to be free must not be put in competition with the life of any individual, be his rank what it may." He paused, but a general murmur of applause showed the full approval of his grim auditory.

"You, sir," he continued, with the solemnity of a judge passing sentence, "are one great obstacle to the possession of our public rights. You are a man of talents and courage, and so much the more dangerous to the patriot cause. You would disdain our folly if we threw away the chance which fortune has put into our hands;—you must die. If

we were in your power, the scaffold would be our portion, You are now in ours, and the question between us is decided." I felt, from his tone, that all remonstrance was useless, and I scorned to supplicate. "Do as you will," I indignantly exclaimed. "I make but one request. It is, that no imputation shall be suffered to rest on my memory; that the manner of my death shall be made known; and that no man shall ever be suffered to believe that I died a coward or a traitor." "It shall be done," slowly pronounced the president.

I heard the click of a lock, and, looking up at the sound, saw one of the sitters at this board of terror, without moving from his place, deliberately levelling a pistol at my head. I closed my eyes.

At the next instant I heard a scuffle; the pistol was knocked out of his hand, and a voice hurriedly exclaimed, "Are you all mad? For what purpose is this butchery? Whom are you about to murder? Do you want to bring a curse upon our cause?" All rose in confusion; but the stranger made but one spring to the spot where I stood, and, fixing his eyes on me with astonishment, loudly repeated my name. As the light fell on him, I recollected at once, though his hat was deeply drawn over his eyes and a huge cloak was wrapped round him, palpably for the purpose of concealment, the rebel leader whom I had so strangely met before. He turned to the table. "And is it in this infamous way," he fiercely exclaimed, "that you show your love of liberty? Is it in blood that you are to dip your charter? Is it in making every man of common sense despise, and every man of humanity hate you, that you are to look for popular good-will? Down with your daggers and pistols! The first man who dares to use them, I declare a traitor to his country!" His energy made an impression; and giving me his hand, which, even in that anxious moment, I could perceive to be as cold as stone, he pronounced the words, "Sir, you are free!" But for this they were not prepared; and some exclamations rose, in which they seemed to regard him as false to the cause, and the words "sold" and "traitor" were more than once audible.

He flamed out at the charge, and passionately demanded

proofs. He then touched another string. "Now listen to what I have to tell you, and then call me traitor if you will. You are in the jaws of ruin. I have but just discovered that Government has obtained a knowledge of your meeting, and that, within five minutes, every man of you will be arrested. I flew to save you: now judge of my honour to the cause. You have only to make your escape, and thank the chance which has rescued your lives." A loud knocking at the door of one of the distant vaults, and a sound like the breaking down of the wall, gave a sudden success to his argument; and the meeting, snatching up their papers and weapons, glided away as silently as so many shadows.

I naturally attempted to thank my protector; but he put his finger to his lip, and pointed to the quarter from which the police were apparently forcing their way into the subterranean. It was clearly a time of peril for himself as well as his associates, and I followed him silently through the windings of this hideous locale. We shortly reached the open air, and I cannot describe the glad and grateful sense with which I saw the sky above my head, the lights glimmering in the windows, and felt that I was once more in the land of the living. My conductor led me within sight of the door of the House of Commons, and, with a slight pressure of the hand, turned from me, and was lost among the crowd. I rushed in exhausted, overpowered, sinking with apprehension of the evil which might have been done in my absence, and blushing at the shame which probably awaited me.

But I was fortunately disappointed. By some means, which I could never subsequently ascertain, a rumour of my seizure had reached the House; and the strongest alarm was excited by the dread of my assassination. The commencement of the debate was suspended. Opposition, with the dignified courtesy which distinguished their leaders, even proposed the adjournment of their motion; the messengers of the House were despatched in all directions to bring some tidings of me; and I had afterwards the satisfaction to find that none imputed my absence to any motive unbecoming my personal or official honour. Thus, when I entered the House, nervous with apprehen-

sion, I was received with a general cheer; my colleagues crowded round me with inquiries and congratulations; members crossed from the opposite benches to express their welcome.

The House was at length hushed, and Grattan rose. I cannot revert to the memory of that extraordinary man without a mixture of admiration and melancholy—admiration for his talents, and melancholy from the feeling that such talents should expire with the time, and be buried in the common dust of the sepulchre. As a senatorial orator he was incontestably the greatest whom I have ever heard. With but little pathos, and with no pleasantry, I never heard any man so universally, perpetually, and powerfully command the attention of the House. There was the remarkable peculiarity in his language, that, while the happiest study of others is to conceal their art, his simplicity had the manner of art. It was keen, concentrated, and polished, by nature. His element was grandeur; the plainest conception, in his hands, assumed a loftiness and power which elevated the mind of his hearers as much as it convinced their reason. If the Pyramids were built to contain the dust of nameless kings and sacrificed cattle, his eloquence erected over materials equally transitory memorials equally imperishable.

But Grattan was an orator by profession, and the only one of his day. The great English speakers adopted oratory simply as the means of their public superiority. Pitt's was the oratory of a ruler of empire; with Fox, oratory was the strong, massive, and yet flexible instrument of a leader of party. But with Grattan it was a faculty, making a portion of the man, scarcely connected with external things, and neither curbed nor guided by the necessities of his political existence. If Grattan had been born in the backwoods, he would have been an orator, and have been persuasive among the men of the hatchet and the rifle. Wherever the tongue of man could have given superiority, or the richest flow and force of conception could have given pleasure, he would have attained eminence and dispensed delight.

It is admitted that in the suffering condition of Ireland he had a prodigious opportunity; but, among thousands of

bold, ardent, and intellectual men, what is his praise who alone rushes to their front and seizes the opportunity? The English rule over the sister country had been charged sometimes as tyranny, which was a libel, and sometimes as injustice, which was an error; but it had an unhappy quality which embraced the evils of both—it was invidious. The only map of Ireland which lay before the English cabinet of the eighteenth century was the map of the sixteenth—a chart spotted with the gore of many battles, not the less bloody that they were obscure, and disfigured with huge, discoloured spaces of barbarism. No Irishman was ever called across the narrow strait between the two countries, to take a share in the offices or enjoy the honours of England. Irish ambition, thwarted in its own country, might wander for ever—like Virgil's unburied ghosts—on the banks of the Irish Channel without a hope of passing that political Styx. The sole connection of the islands was between Whitehall and the Castle—between power and placemen—between cabinets and viceroys. It never descended to the level of the nation.

It was Grattan who first broke down this barrier, and he thus rendered the mighty service of doubling the strength of the empire, perhaps rendered the still mightier service of averting its separtaion and its ruin. But no minister had yet started up in English councils capable of the boldness of throwing open the barrier; none of intellectual stature sufficient to look beyond the old partition wall of the countries; no example of that statesmanlike sagacity which discovers in the present the forms of the future, and pierces the mists which, to inferior minds, magnify the near into giant size, while they extinguish the distant altogether. Still no man can ever write the annals of England without a growing consciousness that magnanimity has been the instinct of her dominion; that she has been liberal on principle and honest by nature; that, even in the chillest and darkest hour of her sovereignty, this influence has existed unimpaired; and, like the influence of gravitation on the globe, that it has accompanied and impelled her, day and night alike, through the whole circuit of her proud and powerful career.

This was the glorious period of Grattan's public life. On this night he spoke with remarkable power, but in a

style wholly distinct from his former appeals to the passions of the House. His accents, usually sharp and high, were now lingering and low; his fiery phraseology was solemn and touching, and even his gesture, habitually distorted and pantomimical, was subdued and simple.

Yet I never saw more expressive evidence of his genius than on this night of universal consternation. His language, ominous and sorrowful, had the tone of an oracle, and was listened to like an oracle. No eye or ear strayed from him for a moment while he wandered dejectedly among the leading events of the time, throwing a brief and gloomy light over each in passing, as if he carried a funeral lamp in his hand and was straying among tombs. This was to me a wholly new aspect of his extraordinary faculties. I had regarded rapidity, brilliancy, and boldness of thought, as his inseparable attributes; but his speech was now a magnificent elegy.

Again I desire to guard against the supposition that I implicitly did homage to either his talents or his political views. From the latter I often and deeply dissented; in the former I could often perceive the infirmity that belongs even to the highest natural powers. He was no "faultless monster." I am content to recollect him as a first-rate human being. He had enemies, and may have them still. But all private feelings are hourly more and more extinguished in the burst of praise still ascending round the spot where his dust is laid. Time does ultimate justice to all, and, while it crumbles down the fabricated fame, only clears and separates the solid renown from the common level of things.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The speech of the opposition leader decided the question. No man on his side would venture beyond the line which he had drawn; and the resolutions of government were triumphantly carried, after a brief appeal from me to the loyalty and manliness of the House. I placed before them the undeniable intention of the cabinet to promote the public prosperity; the immeasurable value of unanimity in

the parliament, to produce confidence in the people; and the magnitude of the stake for which England and Ireland were contending with the enemy of Europe. Those sentiments were received with loud approval; my language was continually echoed during the debate. I was congratulated on all sides; and this night of expectancy and alarm closed in a success which relieved me from all future anxiety for the fate of the government.

The House broke up earlier than usual; and, to cool the fever which the events of the night had produced in my veins, I rambled into one of the spacious squares which add so much to the ornament of that fine city. A group had stopped round a player on the guitar, with which he made a tolerable accompaniment to some foreign songs. My ear was caught by a chorus which I had often heard among the French peasantry, and I joined in the applause.

His song had an interest for me independent of the spirit of the performer. It revived recollections of the noblest scene of popular attachment and faithful fortitude since the days of chivalry. I heard in it the names of all the great leaders of the royalist army—names which nothing but the deepest national ingratitude will ever suffer France to forget; and it gave a glance at the succession of those gallant exploits by which the heroic peasantry and gentlemen of Anjou and Poitou had gained their imperishable distinction.

But the streets of a capital itself almost in a state of siege were not the scene for indulging in romance by starlight; and one of the patrols of soldiery, then going its rounds, suddenly ordered the group to disperse. The Frenchman, unluckily, attempted to apologize for his own appearance on the spot, and the attempt perplexed the matter still more. The times were suspicious, and a foreigner—and of all foreigners a Gaul—caught, under cover of night, singing songs of which the sergeant could not comprehend a syllable, was a personage in every way formed for the guard-house; and he was marched off as a traitor convicted of guitar-playing and other traitorous qualities.

I interposed, but my interposition was in vain. My person was unknown to the man in authority, and I was

evidently, from the frown of the sergeant, regarded as little better than an accomplice. My only resource was to follow the party to the guard-house and see the officer of the night. But he was absent; and, half-laughing at the singular effect of the report in the morning that I had been arrested as the fellow-conspirator of a French mendicant, I called for pen, ink, and paper, to explain my position by a message to the next magistrate. But this request only thickened the perplexity. As I approached the desk to write, the prisoner bounded towards me with a wild outcry, flung his arms round my neck, and, plunging his hand into the deepest recesses of his very wayworn costume, at length drew out a large letter, which he held forth to me with a gesture of triumph. The sergeant looked graver still; his responsibility was more heavily involved by the despatch, which he intercepted on the spot and proceeded to examine, at least so far as the envelope was concerned. He and his guard pored over it in succession. Still it was unintelligible. It was a mysterious affair altogether. The Frenchman and I begged, equally in vain, to be allowed to interpret. Impossible. At length the subaltern on duty was found; and on his arrival I was released, with all due apologies, and carried off the captive and his despatch together.

The letter was addressed to me in French, and in a hand with which I was unacquainted. To obtain any knowledge of its contents on my way home or from its bearer was out of the question until, with a hundred circumlocutions, I had heard the full and entire hair-breadth 'scapes of Monsieur Hannibal Auguste Dindon. He had been the domestic of Madame la Maréchale de Tourville, and had attended her and the countess to England in the emigration; in England he had seen me. On the reduction of the Maréchale's household, he had returned to his own country, and taken service with the royalist army in the Vendée. He had been taken prisoner, and was on the point of being shot when he saw the countess, a prisoner also in the republican hands, who interceded for his safety and gave him this letter, to be delivered to me if he should escape. After following the march of the armies, a defeat scattered the republican division along with which they

were carried; he procured a conveyance for the countess to the coast of Brittany, and they embarked in one of the fishing vessels for England. Again ill-luck came; a storm caught them in the Channel, swept them the crew knew not where, and finally threw them on the iron-bound shore of the west of Ireland. Clotilde was now actually in the capital, on her way to England!

If ever there was wild joy in the heart of man, it was in mine at that intelligence. It was a flash of light, bright, bewildering, overwhelming!

I longed to be alone, to hear no sound of the human tongue, to indulge in the deep and silent delight of the overladen heart. But M. Hannibal was not a personage to be disappointed of his share of interest. The substance of his tale, however, was, that, his resources having fallen short on the road, and resolving not to burden the finances of the countess, which he believed to be scarcely less exhausted than his own, he had made use of his voice and guitar to recruit his purse,—a chance which he now designated as a miracle, devised by the saint who presided over his birthday, to finish his perils in all imaginable felicity.

Giving him into the care of my servants, I was at length alone. The letter was in my hand. Yet still I dreaded to break the seal. What might not be the painful sentiments and sorrowful remonstrances within that seal? But Clotilde was living; was near me; was still the same confiding, generous, and high-souled being; sorrow and terror were now passed away. I opened the letter. It was a detail of her thoughts, written in the few moments which she could snatch from the insulting surveillance round her, and was evidently intended less as a letter than a legacy of her last feelings, written to relieve an overburdened heart, with but slight hope of its ever reaching my hand. It was written on various fragments of paper, and often blotted with tears. It began abruptly. I shuddered at the misery which spoke in every word.

"I am at this hour in the lowest depths of wretchedness. I have but one consolation, that no life can endure this agony long. After being carried from garrison to garrison, with my eyes shocked and my feelings tortured

by the sights and sufferings of war, I am at last consigned to the hands of the being whom on earth I most dread and abhor. Montrecour has arrived, to take the command in Saumur. I have not yet seen him, but he has had the cruelty to announce that I am his prisoner, and shall be his wife. But the wife of Montrecour I never will be; rather a thousand times would I wed the grave!

"This letter may never reach your hands, or, if it does, it may only be when the great barrier is raised between us, and this heart shall be dust. Marston, shall I then be remembered? Shall my faith, my feelings, and my sufferings, ever come across your mind? Let not Clodilde be forgotten. I revered, honoured, loved you.

"From that eventful day when I first met your glance, I determined that no power on earth should ever make me the wife of another. To me you remained almost a total stranger. I finally resolved to abandon the world, to hide my unhappy head in a convent, and there, in loneliness and silence, endure, for I never could hope to extinguish, those struggles of heart which forced me to leave all the charms of existence behind for ever.

"The loss of my beloved parent gave me the power of putting my resolution into effect. I returned to France, though in the midst of its distractions, and took refuge under the protection of my venerable relative, the superior of the convent at Valenciennes. My narrative is now brief, but most melancholy. On the evening of the day when I heard your love—a day which I shall remember with pride and gratitude to the closing hour of my existence—we were suffered to pass the gates and take the route for Italy. But, on the third day of our journey, we were stopped by a division of the republican forces on their march to the Vendée. We were arrested as aristocrats, and moved from garrison to garrison, until we reached the republican head-quarters at Saumur, where, to my infinite terror, I found Montrecour governor of the fortress. He was a traitor to his unhappy king. Betrothed to him in my childhood, according to the foolish and fatal custom of our country, I was still in some degree pledged to him. But now no human bond shall ever unite me to one whom I doubly disdain as a traitor Still I am in his power.

"I spent the livelong night on my knees. Tears and prayers were my sole comfort during those melancholy hours. But time rolls on. Montrecour has just sent to tell me that my choice must be made by noon—the altar or the guillotine. An escort is now preparing to convey prisoners to Nantes, where the horrible revolutionary tribunal holds a perpetual sitting; and I must follow them, or be his bride! Never! I have given my answer, and gladly I welcome my fate. I have solemnly bid farewell to this world.

"No! My tyrant is not so merciful. He has this moment sent to 'command' (that is the word)—*to command* my presence in the church, 'as he is about to *march* against the enemy, and he must be master of my hand before he takes the field.' The troops are already preparing for the march. I hear the drums beating. But one short hour is given me to prepare. Would I were dead!

"There are times when the soul longs to quit her tenement: when the brain sees visions; when the heart feels bursting; when a thousand weapons seem ready for the hand, and a voice of temptation urges to acts of woe. Marston, Marston, where are you at this hour?"

The letter fell from my hands, and it was some time before I could resume the reading of the blotted lines upon my table. I dreaded their next announcement. The next sentence might announce to me that Clotilde had been compelled by force to a detested marriage. I took up the letter again.

"Another day has passed, of terror and anguish unspeakable. Yet it has closed in thanksgiving. I have been respited. I was forced from my chamber—I was forced to the altar—I was forced to endure the sight of Montrecour at my side—a revolutionary priest stood prepared to perform the hateful ceremony. But, during the delay produced by my determination to die rather than yield, I could see confusion growing among the spectators. I heard the hurried trampling of cavalry through the streets. Drums and trumpets began to sound in all quarters. The tumult evidently increased. I could perceive, even in the stony features of Montrecour, his perplexity at being detained from showing himself at the head of the troops; and, with senses wound to their utmost pitch by the

anxiety of the moment, I thought that I could hear the distant shouts of an immense multitude advancing to the walls. Aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp now came hurrying in, each with a fresh summons to their general. He alternately threatened, insulted and implored me. But no measure or entreaty on earth could make me consent.

"At length I heard a heavy fire of cannon, followed by the shattering of houses and the outcries of the people. The batteries of the town soon returned the fire, and all was uproar. Montrecour, gnashing his teeth, and with the look and fury of a fiend, now rushed towards me, and bore me to the feet of the priest. I felt the light leaving my eyes, and hoped that I was dying. At that moment a cannon-shot struck the steeple, and dashed down a large portion of its fragments on the floor. The priest and his attendants, thinking that the whole fabric was falling, made their escape. Montrecour, with an exclamation full of the bitterness of his soul, flung me from him, and, swearing that my respite should be brief, darted from the chapel, followed by the soldiers. What words ever uttered by human lips can tell the gratitude with which I saw myself left alone, and knelt upon that floor, covered with ruins!

"I am now on my way once more, I know not whither. The battle continued during the day, and the sights and sounds were almost too much for the human senses to bear. At night the royalists stormed the outworks of the fortress, and, to prevent our release in the capitulation, the prisoners were sent away in the darkness. As our carriage passed the gates I saw Montrecour borne in wounded. The spirit of the insulter was in him still. He ordered the soldiers to bring his litter near me, and in a voice faint through pain, but bitter with baffled revenge, he murmured, 'Countess, you shall not have long to indulge in your caprices. My hurts are trifling. You are still in my power.'

"What a hideous desolation is war! We have just passed through one of the forest villages, which, but a few days since, must have been loveliness itself. The cottages were all in ashes, the gardens trampled, the vineyards cut down for the fires of the bivouac, the chapel

was even smouldering still, and the river exhibited some frightful remnants of what were once human beings.

"I write these lines at long intervals, in fear, and only when the escort are sleeping on their horses' necks, or eating their hurried meals upon the ground.

"Last night the royalist army crossed the Loire, and the firing continued until morning. The heights all seemed crowned with flame. The forest in which we had stopped for the night was set on fire in the conflict, and a large body of the royalist cavalry skirmished with the retreating republicans till morning. It was a night of indescribable terror; but my personal fears were forgotten in sorrow for my honoured and aged companion. I gazed upon her feeble frame and sinking countenance with the certainty that in a few hours all would be over. How rejoicingly would I share the quiet of her tomb!"

My heart heaved at a reality of wretchedness so deep that I could scarcely conceive it to have passed away. My mind was in the forest. I saw the pursuit; the firing rang in my ears; and in the midst of this shock of flying and fighting men, I saw Clotilde wiping the dews of death from the brow of her helpless relative.

The illusion was even strengthened at this moment by the flashing of a strong and sudden light across the ceiling of my chamber, and the trampling of a body of troops by torchlight entering the Castle gates. A squadron of dragoons had arrived, escorting a carriage. Even my glance at the buildings of the Castle-square could scarcely recall me to the truth of the locality, until an aide-de-camp knocked at my door with a request from the viceroy that I should see him as soon as possible. Safely locking up my precious record, I followed him.

There was a ball on that night in the Castle, and our way to the private apartments of his Excellency leading through the state saloon, the whole showy display struck upon my eyes at once.

The Irish are a handsome race, and none more enjoy, or are more fitted by nature or temper for, all the ornamental displays of society; a Castle ball was always a glittering exhilaration of lustre and beauty.

My conference with the viceroy was soon concluded.

The prisoner had commanded a body of insurgents, who, after some partial successes, had been broken, and dispersed. The leader, in his desperate attempts to rally them, had been severely wounded, and was taken on the field. From the papers found on his person, an important clue to the principal personages and objects of the revolt was promised; and I proceeded to the place of temporary detention, to examine him on the rebellion.

What an utter breaking up of the vision which had so lately absorbed all my feelings! What a contrast was now before me to the pomps and pleasures of the *fête!* On a table in the guard-house lay a human form, scarcely visible by the single dim light which flickered over it from the roof. Some of the dragoons, covered with the marks of long travel, were wearily lounging on the benches, or gazing on the unhappy countenance which lay, as if in sleep or death, before them. A sabre-wound had covered his forehead with gore, which, almost concealing all his features rendered him a hideous spectacle. Even the troopers, though sufficiently indignant at the very name of rebel, either respected the singular boldness of his defence, or stood silenced by the appalling nature of the sight. The hope of obtaining any information from him was now given up; he was evidently insensible, and all that I could do was done by placing him in the care of the surgeons in attendance on the household, and ordering that he should have every accommodation consistent with his safe-keeping for the time.

I returned to my chamber, and was again lost in the outpourings of a pen which had all the candour of a dying confession. Clotilde was again murmuring in my ear those solemn thoughts which she believed that she was writing only to be trampled in the mazes of a French forest. Her last words were—

"Marston, Marston, we shall never meet again! In my days of wretchedness I have sometimes wept over the resolution by which I tore myself away from you. But every calmer thought has strengthened me in the consciousness that I could give no higher proof of the honour, the homage, the fond and fervent affection of my soul. I dared not be a burden on your tenderness, or an obstacle

to your natural distinction. I relinquished the first object of my heart, and in that act I still take a melancholy pride. I showed you of what sacrifices I am capable for your sake. But what sacrifice is too vast for the heart of woman? Farewell! you will never see me more.

"CLOTILDE DE TOURVILLE."

During that night I found it impossible to rest; I continued walking up and down my chamber, alternately reading those fragments and gazing on the skies from my casement, until the lights of the *fête* had decayed, and the moonbeams had grown pale before the first flush of dawn. The sounds of life now came upon the cool air, and I was again in the world.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE eventful day was come—the day which I had longed for with such ceaseless impatience through years of trial—the day of which, among scenes the most disturbing, the most perilous, or the most glittering, I had never lost sight for a moment. It was come at last; and yet, such are the strange varieties and trembling sensibilities of human feelings, I now felt awed, uncertain, and almost alarmed at its arrival. Before its close I was to see the being in whom my existence was involved.

Still, the hour advanced, and I sent a note by her attendant soliciting an interview. Her hotel was within a short distance, yet no answer came. At length, unable to endure this fever of the soul, I determined to make the trial at once, enter her presence, make a final declaration of all my hopes and fears, and hear my fate once for all.

I was on the point of leaving my chamber for the purpose, when a message from the viceroy stopped me. The prisoner whom I had seen brought in during the night was to be examined before the privy council, and my presence was essential. Fate, or fortune, thus seemed always to thwart me. I followed the messenger. The prisoner was led into the council-room just as I entered; and at the first glance I recognized in him the unhappy

being whom I had so strangely met in the North, and whose romance of rebellion had so deeply excited my interest.

His features, which, in the night, disfigured with dust and blood, I had been unable to distinguish, now exhibited their original aspect, that cast of mingled melancholy and daring which marked him at once as conscious of the perils of his career, and resolved to encounter them to the uttermost. His tribunal was formed of the first men of the country, and they treated him with the dignity of justice. His conduct was suitable to this treatment—calm, decided, and with more the manner of a philosopher delivering deliberate opinions on the theory of government than of a desperate contemner of authority, and the head of a wide and fierce conspiracy against the settled order of things. He cast his deep and powerful glance round the council-board, as if to measure the capacities of the men with whom he had once prepared himself to contend for national supremacy; but I could not discover that he had any recollection of me. But I knew him well; and if ever painter or sculptor had desired to fix in canvas or marble the "ideal" of stately conspiracy, there stood its model in the man before me. He spoke without the slightest appearance of alarm, and spoke long and ably, in explanation of his views; for he disdained all justification of them. He acknowledged their total failure, but still contended for their original probability of success, and for their natural necessity as the restoratives of Ireland.

He was listened to with a forbearance arising alike from compassion for the fate which he had thus chosen, and from respect for the singular talent which he displayed in this crisis of his fate. Man honours fortitude in all its shapes. The criminal was almost forgotten in the eloquent enthusiast who, with deep and touching voice, and eager but most expressive gestures, poured out his glowing dreams. He concluded by declaring a total contempt for life, pronouncing that with the loss of his political hopes it had lost its value, and making but one request to the council, that, "since fortune had flung him into the hands of their law, its vengeance might be done upon him with the least possible delay."

He was now removed, and a feeling of regret and even of admiration followed his removal. But his crime was undeniable; the disturbance of the public mind was too serious to allow of any relaxation in the rigour of justice; and I gave my unwilling signature to his final commitment to the state prison.

I was now once again disengaged from the fetters of office, and, resolved not to spend another day of suspense, I drove to the hotel. I found it crowded with families which had fled from their houses in the country in the first alarm of the insurrection, and, in the midst of the good-humoured but unmanageable tumult of a great household of Irish strangers, was forced to find my own way at last. In passing along, my eye was caught by a valise laid outside one of the parlours, and corded as for an immediate departure. It was marked with "La Comtesse de Tourville." I knocked gently at the door. I was unanswered. I touched it—it gave way, and I stood on the threshold.

Before me, at a table, sat a female figure, writing, with her face turned from me, and apparently so deeply engaged as not to have heard my entrance. But I should have known her among a million. I pronounced her name. She started up, in evident alarm at the intrusion. But, in the next moment, her pale countenance was flushed by nature's richest rose, and she held forth her hand to me. All my fears vanished with that look and the touch of that hand. All the language of earth could not have told me half what they told at that moment.

I returned to the Castle a new being. The burden which had weighed so long upon my spirits was now removed. The root of bitterness, which continually sent up its noxious vegetation in the midst of the most flattering hopes of my public existence, was now extirpated; I was secure in the full confidence of one of the loveliest and the noblest-hearted of human beings. And yet how narrowly had I escaped the loss of all! Clotilde, hopeless of ever hearing of me more, had formed the determination to leave Ireland on that day, and, weary of disappointed affections, and alienated from the world, to change her name, abjure her rank, and take the veil in one of the Italian convents connected with her family. I should thus have lost her

for ever. But the hour had come when her past anxieties were to be exchanged for the faith and fondness of one who knew her infinite value, and was determined to devote his life to embellishing and cheering every hour of her existence.

We were married, and I had the delight and honour of introducing Clotilde into a circle of rank and lustre equal to the highest of her native country. The monarchy of France was long since in the tomb; its nobility were wanderers over the face of the earth. The fortunes, the hopes, the honours, all but the name of her distinguished family, had gone down in the general wreck. But now was given to me the joyous duty of replacing, by the purest and fondest of all rights, all that the chances of the world had taken away.

I thought her countenance lovelier than ever. It exhibited some slight evidence of the deep and harassing trials which she had so long endured; it was pale, yet the paleness reminded me of the exquisite hue of some of those fine sculptures which the Italian chisel has given for the admiration of mankind. Its expression, too, had assumed a loftier character than even when its first glance struck my young imagination. It had shared something of the elevation of a mind noble by nature, but rendered still loftier and more intellectual by being thrown on its own resources. Yet all this was for society.

But it was in our quiet and lonely hours that I saw the still more captivating aspects of her nature, when neither the splendid Countess de Tourville nor the woman of brilliant conversation was before me, but an innocent and loving girl,—no Armida, no dazzling mistress of the spells which intoxicate the heart by first bewildering the mind, but a sweet and guileless creature in the first bloom of being, full of nature, full of simplicity, full of truth. How often, in those days of calm delight, have I seen her fine eyes suddenly fill with tears of thankful joy, her cheek glow with fond gratitude, her heart labour with the unutterable language of secure and sacred love!

What hours can be placed in comparison with such hours of wedded confidence? It was then that I first became acquainted with the nature of the female heart.

I then first knew the treasures which the spirit of woman may contain—the hope against hope, the generous faith, the unfailing constancy, the deep affection. How often, when glancing round our superb apartments, crowded with all the glittering and costly equipment of almost royal life, she would clasp my hand, and touchingly contrast them with the solitude of her cell, or the anxieties of that life of trial "from which I alone had rescued her!" Then I saw her eyes brighten, and her cheek bloom with new lustre and beauty unknown before, until I could have almost fallen at her feet and worshipped. I felt the whole supremacy of woman, with the whole homage of the heart of man.

A change in the British cabinet, by the death of one of its leading members, now prodnced a change in the vice-royalty; and the charge of the government during the interregnum necessarily devolved on the secretary. I never felt business more irksome than at this juncture, and I had more than once grave thoughts of casting aside the staff of office in spite of all its gilding, withdrawing from the disturbances of public life, and, with Clotilde at my side, finding some quiet corner of England, or the earth, where we might sit under our own vine and our own fig-tree, and forget revolutions and court-days for the rest of our lives.

But against this my young and lovely partner protested with all the spirit of her ancestry, declaring that, though nothing would give her more unfeigned delight than to quit courts and cities, and fashion and *fêtes*, for ever—if I quitted them along with her—she could not endure the thought of my allowing "the talents which nature had given to me, and the opportunities which had been so liberally offered by fortune," to perish useless to the world. I had no answer to offer but that I had made her the arbitress of my fate, and she was welcome to do with me as was her sovereign will.

Accordingly I left her, to plunge into a chaos of undecipherable papers, to be deafened with a thousand impossible applications, to marshal lazy departments, to reform antiquated abuses, and, after spending twelve hours a day in the dust and gloom of official duty, to spend

nearly as many hours of the night battling with arrogant and angry faction in the House of Commons.

But this toil, like most other toils, had its fruits; it gave me an extraordinary increase of public influence, and that influence produced, in the natural course of such things, an extraordinary crop of adherents. If I could have drunk adulation, no man was in more imminent hazard of mystifying his own brains. I began to be spoken of as one equal to the highest affairs of the state, and to whom the viceroyalty itself lay naturally open. But I still longed for a return to England. A new viceroy was announced, and I solicited my recall. But I had still one remarkable duty to undergo.

The northern insurrection had sunk, and sunk with a rapidity still more unexpected than the suddenness of its rise. The capture of its leader was a blow at the heart, and it lost all power at the instant. In the Castle all was self-congratulation, and the officials talked of the revolt with as much scorn as if there existed no elements of discord in the land. But my brief tour of the island had shown me that there were materials of wilder inflammability in the bosom of the south than in the north. I represented to ministers that the north had revolted only on theories of government, metaphysical reveries, pamphleteering abstractions—food too thin to nurture the fierce firmness by which conspiracy is to be carried forward into triumph; while the south pondered on real or fancied injuries, which wounded the pride of every peasant within its borders.

My advice was answered by professions of perfect security, and magnanimous declarations of the wisdom of extinguishing peril by exhibiting the absence of fear. My part was now done, and I was thenceforth to be only a spectator. But the course of things was not to be controlled by the confidence of cabinets. My prediction was formidably fulfilled: the firebrand and the pike ravaged the land; blood flowed in torrents; and when the country returned to its senses, and the light of common sense once more dawned, ministers and people alike had only the melancholy office of burying the common offences in that great resting-place where the faults of the past generation

are marked by tombs, and where the wisdom of the future is to be learned only from inscriptions recording the frailty of all that lived before.

The conspiracy which it had fallen to my lot to extinguish had been brief and local. The time now approached when the leader of the northern insurrection was to be brought to trial; and, hostile as I was to the effects of his enthusiasm, I took no trivial interest in the individual.

In England the bar holds a high rank, from its essential value to the maintenance of public right in a country where every possession, property, and principle of man comes continually in the shape of a question of right, and where the true supremacy is in the law. But in Ireland the spirit of the nation compensated for the deficiency of power in the law; and the bar was, *par excellence*, the profession of the gentleman. This gave it the highest tone of personal manners. It had another incentive, still more characteristic. The House of Commons was in the closest connection with the bar. It was scarcely more than a higher bar. All the principal men of that House had either been educated for the profession, or were actually practising barristers; and as the distinctions of the senate were more dazzling, as well as more rapidly attainable, than those of the law, the strength of the profession was thrown into parliamentary life. The result was a reflected influence on both, the learning of the bar invigorating the logic of the debates, the eloquence of the debates enriching and elevating the eloquence of the courts of law. At this period the courts abounded with eloquent men, who would have been distinguished at any tribunal on earth; but, while some might exhibit keener argument, and others more profound learning, the palm of forensic eloquence was universally conceded to one. Need I pronounce the name of Curran? "Take him for all in all," he was among the most extraordinary examples of original faculties that I have ever known.

When Burke spoke, he had the world for his hearer; he stood balancing the fates of empires; his voice reached to the bosom of all the cabinets of civilized nations; and, with the office of a prophet, he almost inevitably adopted

the majestic language, and seized the awful and magnificent views, of the prophet.

Sheridan, too, was awakened to a consciousness of his own powers by the national voice raised against Indian delinquencies. He had there a subject teeming with the loftiest materials of oratory—the sufferings of princes, the mysteries of oriental superstition, the wild horrors of barbaric tyranny, the fall of thrones once dazzling the eye and the mind with all the splendours of oriental empire; himself the chosen pleader for India, in the presence of the assembled rank, dignity, and authority of England. There can be no question of the genius which showed itself competent to so illustrious a labour.

But Curran spoke almost wholly deprived of those resistless stimulants; his topics were comparatively trivial—the guilt of provincial conspiracy, incurred by men chiefly in the humbler ranks of life, and in all instances obscure. No great principles of national right were to live or die upon the success of his pleading; no distressed nation hailed him as its defender; no impregnable barrier against oppression in Europe or Asia was to be inscribed with his name. He was simply an advocate in the narrow courts of a dependent kingdom, humiliated by the hopeless effort to rescue a succession of unfortunate beings, whose lives were already in the grasp of justice; compressed on every side by localities of time, habit, and opinion; and thwarted alike by the clamours of prejudice and the frowns of authority. Yet his speeches at the bar are unequalled to this hour.

The trial of the unfortunate rebel leader gave him a signal opportunity for the exertion of his extraordinary faculties. It had excited the deepest interest throughout the country. Thousands had flocked from all parts of the land to be present at a crisis which excited the national feelings in the highest degree; which involved the personal safety of individuals perhaps of a much superior rank to the accused; and, above all, which seemed to fix the stamp of public justice on the guilt or impunity of opinions long cherished by the mind of Ireland. As the day of the trial approached, physiognomies were to be seen in the streets which showed that individuals were brought to-

gether by the event who had never been in the metropolis before. The stern and hard, but sagacious countenances of the north were thronging beside the broad, open, and bold features of the south; and those again contrasted with the long, dark, and expressive visages of the west, which still give such indelible evidence of their Spanish origin. Many of the men who now filled the busy thoroughfares of the capital had come from the remotest corners of Ireland, as if to stand their own trial. The prisoner at the bar was their representative; his cause was their cause; his judgment the decision of the tribunal on their principles; his fate only an anticipation of their own.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

As I drove towards the noble building where the trial was to take place—one of the stateliest examples of architectural grace and dignity in a city distinguished for the beauty of its public buildings — it was impossible to avoid being struck with the general look of popular restlessness. The precaution of government had called in a large military force to protect the general tranquillity, and the patrols of cavalry and the frequent passing of troops to their posts created a perpetual movement in the streets. The populace gathered in groups, which, rapidly dissolving at the approach of the soldiery, as rapidly assembled again when they had passed by; street minstrels of the most humble description were plying their trade with a remorseless exertion of lungs; I heard the names of the parliamentary leaders and the government frequently transpiring in those rough specimens of the popular taste; and, from the alternate roars of fierce laughter and bursts of wild indignation which arose from the groups, it was evident that "men and measures" were not spared. The aspect of the multitude in the vicinity of the law courts was still more disturbed.

Rebellion has a physiognomy of its own, and I had by this time learned to read it with tolerable fidelity to its nature. It always struck me as of a wholly different character from that of the vice or the violence of the people.

It wears a thoughtful air; the lips seem to have a secret enclosed, the eye is lowering, the step unsteady; the man exhibits a consciousness of danger from the glance or tread of every passer-by. On this day I could have predicted the preparation for some general and reckless rising against government on the first opportunity when it should be found slumbering on its post; and my prediction would have been true.

The court was crowded, and it was with no small difficulty that I was enabled to reach the seat beside the judge which had been provided for me. The arraignment and preparatory routine of the trial gave time for the court to subside into order; and the address of the principal law-officer for the prosecution, though exciting the deepest anxiety, was listened to in the most respectful silence. The case was strong, and was ably dealt with by the attorney-general. The evidence was clear and complete, and the hope of an acquittal seemed to be gradually abandoned in the expressive gloom of the spectators. The prisoner at the bar, too, seemed to be more dejected than I had presumed from his former intrepidity; and the few glances which I could suffer myself to give to a being in his calamitous condition, showed me a frequent writhing of the lip, a clenching of the teeth, and a nervous contraction of the features which looked like despair.

At length the counsel for the defence rose.

Curran was the last man to be judged of by appearances. Nature had been singularly unkind to his exterior, as if the more to astonish us by the powers of the man within. His figure was undersized, his visage brown, hard, and peasant-like; his gesture was a gesticulation, and his voice was alternately feeble and shrill. His whole effect was to be derived from means with which that little meagre frame and sharp treble had nothing to do. But he had a singularly vivid eye. It was of the deepest black, and such was the intensity of its expression, in his more impassioned moments, that it was scarcely an exaggeration to say that it shot fire. Still a stranger would have regarded him chiefly as a humourist, from the glances of sly sarcasm, and even of open ridicule, which he cast round the court during the pleadings of some of his "learned brethren." But in that

court his true powers were known; and the moment of his rising, careless as was his attitude, and listless the look which he gave as he turned from his brief to the jury, was the signal for universal silence, and the fixing of every eye upon the great pleader.

He began by sweeping away the heap of useless facts and forensic prolixities with which his predecessors had encumbered the case; and nothing could be more admirable than the dexterity with which he seized on the most casual circumstances tending to clear the character of the accused. But it was when he arrived at higher topics that he displayed his genius. It was when, from developing the ignorance and contradictions of the informer by whom the charge of conspiracy was sustained, he rushed to the attack on the general system of the Irish government, that I saw him in his full vigour. He denounced it as the source of all the tumults which had of late years shaken the "isle from its propriety." "Here was the fount," said he, "from which flowed the waters of bitterness, not the less bitter that I can trace its wanderings through centuries of national desolation, through fields of blood, and beside the graves of generations."

After giving the most daring outline of what he termed "the evils of the local sovereignty of Ireland," he surprised me into sudden acquiescence and involuntary admiration by a panegyric on the principles of British government in the more favoured island—"the majestic supremacy of the law, extending over all things, sustaining all things administering life, and health, and purity to all; a moral atmosphere, though, like the physical, invisible, yet, like it, irresistible in its strength, penetrating the whole national existence, and carrying on, undisturbed and perpetual, in the day and night of empire, all the great processes of national animation and prosperity." Then, suddenly darting away from this abstracted and solemn view, he indulged in some wild story of native humour which convulsed the whole audience with laughter. Yet, before the burst had subsided, he touched another string of that harp which so magically responded to the master's hand. He described the long career of calamity through which an individual born with a glowing heart, brilliant faculties, and an aspiring spirit,

must struggle, in a country filled with the pride of independence, and yet, for ages, languishing in the condition of a province.

But he suddenly started into a new course of thought, and reprobated with the loftiest rebuke that state of the law which, while it required two witnesses for the proof of treason in England, was content with one in Ireland. This he branded with indignant vituperation, adopted, according to his habit, from the most familiar conceptions, yet, by their familiarity, striking the mind with astonishing force. He called it "playing at pushpin with the lives of men"—"the reading-made-easy of judicial murder"—"the 'rule-of-three' of forensic assassination; given, a villain multiplied by a false oath—the product an execution!"

He now revelled in the boldest extravagances of imagery and language, using expressions which, written, might resemble the burlesque of a public jester, or the wildness of a disturbed mind, but which were followed by the audience, whom he had heated up to the point of passion, with all but acclamation. Still he revelled on, his contrasts and comparisons continuing to roll out upon each other, some noble, some grotesque, but all effective. "Alas!" said he, in a voice which seemed sinking with a sense of misfortune, "why do *I* jest? and why do *you* smile? Or are we for ever to be the victims of our national propensity, and led away by trivialities? We tickle ourselves with straws when we should be arming for the great contests of national minds. We are ready to be amused with the twang of the Jew's harp, when we should be yearning for the blast of the trumpet. You remind me, and I remind myself, of the scene at one of our country-wakes. It is the true portrait of our fruitless mixture of levity and sorrow. We come to mourn, and we yield to merriment at the first jest. We sit under the roof of death, yet we are as ready to laugh as ever—the corpse of Ireland is before our eyes: we fling a few flowers over its shroud, and then 'we eat, drink, and are merry.' Must it for ever be pronounced that we are a frivolous and a fickle race—that the Irishman remains a voluntary beggar, with all the bounties of nature round him; unknown to fame, with genius flashing from his eyes; humiliated, with all the

armoury of law and liberty open to his hands; and laughing, laughing on, when the only echo is from the chambers of the grave?"

The orator dropped his head on his clasped hands as he spoke the last words, and there was a universal silence for a while. It was interrupted by a groan of agony from the prisoner. All eyes were instantly turned to the dock, and the spectacle there was startling. He seemed writhing under intolerable torture. His hands clung eagerly to the front of the dock, as if to sustain him; his lips were colourless, but his features and forehead were of the most feverish suffusion. At first the general impression was that he had been overcome by a sense of his perilous condition; but it was soon evident that his pangs were more physical than moral. Curran flung his brief upon the table and hurried over to his unhappy client's side. A few words passed between them, inaudible to the court; but they had the unexpected effect of apparently restoring the sufferer to complete tranquillity. He again stood erect; his brow (and it was a bold one) resumed its marble smoothness; his features grew calm, and his whole aspect returned to the stern and moveless melancholy of an antique statue.

The advocate now, as if with renewed sympathy, commenced a singularly powerful attempt to avert the sentence by an appeal to the national feelings. "If," said he, "the prisoner had been charged with any of those crimes which effect their object by individual injury, I should disdain to offer a defence, which could be accomplished only by confounding the principles of right and wrong. But here is an instance in which the noblest mind might err, in which the highest sagacity might be perplexed, in which the most self-denying virtue might discover nothing but a voluntary sacrifice." The problem before his client was "the proudest that had ever occupied the mind in ancient or modern times. It was by what means a patriot might raise his country to the highest possible elevation. But what are the essentials for such a purpose? Intrepidity, independence of soul, the steadiest perseverance, the manliest fortitude—all the great qualities of head and heart. Those are the tributes which the patriot must bring to the altar of his country. But, if

the priest at that altar must be prepared to be himself the sacrifice, is it the hand of his countrymen that is to strike the knife into the victim?"

A sense of this hazardous line of observation, however, soon struck the pleader; and, from the glow on his countenance, and the sudden brightness of his eye, I could see that he was about to throw himself loose on some new current of rich and rapid illustration, when he was suddenly stopped by a shriek from the dock. The prisoner had fallen, with his head over its front, and seemed gasping in the last pangs. The drops of torture stood thick on his brow, his eye was glazed, and his lips continued to quiver, without the power of utterance. The advocate approached him; the dying man caught him by the hand; and, as if the touch had restored his faculties at the instant, said, with a faint smile, and in a low tone, yet so clear as to be audible to the whole assembly, in the words of Pierre—"We have deceived the senate!" In the utterance he fell back and died. To escape the ignominy of the scaffold, the unhappy man, before he came into court, had swallowed poison!

I speak of Curran as I see him through the lapse of years. Yet time has had no other effect on my recollection than to raise my estimate of his genius. I fully admit that, in judging of an extraordinary man, time may unduly exalt the image as well as confuse the likeness; the haze of years may magnify all the nobler outlines, while it conceals all that would enfeeble their dignity.

But the *contrasts* of his style were his alone. To me his eloquence now resembles those midsummer-night dreams in which all is contrast and all is magical. Shapes diminutive and grotesque for a moment, and then suddenly expanding into majesty and beauty,—topics the most trifling and hopeless converted, at a touch, into superb and solemn themes,—like deserts in the dream changed, at a glance, into all the luxury of landscape. The power of his creations still haunts me; Aladdin's palace, starting from the sands, was not more sudden, fantastic, or glittering.

On returning to London, I found the world in the "transition state." The spirit of the people was changed; the nature of the war was changed; the principle of the great parties in the legislature was changed.

I too had my share in the change. I had now passed my public noviciate, and had obtained my experience of statesmanship, on a scale, if too small for history, yet sufficiently large to teach me the working of the machinery. National conspiracy, the council-chamber, popular ebullition, and the tardy but powerful action of public justice, had been my tutors; and I was now felt, by the higher powers, to be not unfit for trust in a larger field. My exertions in the legislature soon enabled me to give satisfactory evidence that I had not altogether overlooked the character of the crisis; and, after some interviews with the premier, his approval of my conduct in Ireland was followed by the proposal of office with a seat in the cabinet.

I had thus attained, in the vigour of life, a distinction for which hundreds, perhaps thousands, had laboured through life in vain. But mine was no couch of silken prosperity. The period was threatening. The old days of official repose were past, never to return. The state of Europe was hourly assuming an aspect of the deepest peril. The war had hitherto been but the struggle of armies; it now threatened to be the struggle of nations. It had hitherto lived on the natural resources of public expenditure; it now began to prey upon the vitals of kingdoms. The ordinary finance of England was to be succeeded by imposts pressing heavily on the existing generation, and laying an hereditary burden on all that were to follow. In the midst of this confusion, even a new terror arose.

The democracy of France, after startling Europe, had seemed to be sinking into feebleness and apathy, when a new wonder appeared in the political hemisphere, too glaring and too ominous to suffer our eyes to turn from it for a moment. The consulate assumed the rule of France, The extraordinary man who now took the lead in France had touched the string which vibrated in the heart of every native of the soil. He had found them weary of the crimes of the democracy; he told them that a career of universal supremacy was open before them. He had found them degraded by the consciousness of riot and regicide; he told them that they were the chevaliers of the new age, and destined to eclipse the chevaliers of all the ages past. His Italian campaigns, by their rapidity, their fine combinations, and their astonishing success, had created a new art of war.

He had brought them romantic triumphs from the land of romance.

Day by day the populace of the capital had been summoned to see pageants of Italian standards, cannon, and prisoners. Every courier that galloped through the streets had brought tidings of some new conquest; and every meeting of the councils was employed in announcing the addition of some classic province, the overthrow of some hostile diadem, or the arrival of some convoy of those most magnificent of all the spoils of war, the treasures of the Italian arts. France began to dream of the conquest of the world.

The contrast between her past calamities and her present splendour powerfully heightened the illusion. France loves illusion; she has always rejoiced in glittering deceptions, even with the perfect knowledge that they were deceptions; and here stood the most dazzling of political charlatans, the great wonder-worker, raising phantoms of national glory even out of the charnel. The wrecks of faction, the remnants of the monarchy, and the corpses lying headless in the shadow of the guillotine, gave full semblance to the conception. The Republic *was* a charnel. But her people, by nature in extremes, wild and fierce, yet gallant and generous, had become at length conscious of the national fall in the eyes of Europe.

After a lassitude, so long that it had extinguished all but the memory of her old triumphs, France had been suddenly raised into the broadest lustre of European sovereignty. The world *was* changed; and the limits of that change offered only a more resistless lure to the popular passion, for their being still indistinct to the keenest eye of man.

But our chief struggle was at home, and the reaction of our foreign disasters came with terrible weight upon a cabinet already tottering. We saw our fate. Days and nights of the most anxious consultation could not relieve us from the hourly-increasing evidence that the Continent was on the verge of ruin. The voice of opposition, reinforced by the roar of the multitude, could no longer be shut out by the curtains of the council-chamber. Fox, always formidable, was never more confident and more popular than when he made the House ring with prophecies of national downfall.

We still fought, but it was the fight of despair. Pitt was imperturbable; but there was not one among his colleagues who did not feel the hopelessness of calling for public reliance.

In all my recollections of public life, this was the period of the deepest perplexity. The name of the great minister has been humiliated by those who judge of the past only by the present.

It can be no dishonour to the memory of the first of statesmen to acknowledge that he had not the gift of miracle. Europe had never before seen a war of the people.

Even to this hour I think that the true source of revolutionary triumph has been mistaken—it was not in the furious energy of its factions, nor in the wild revenge of the people, nor even in the dazzling views of national conquest. Those were but gusts of the popular tempest, currents of the great popular tide. But the mighty mover of all was the sudden change from the disgusts and depressions of serfdom into a sense that all the world of possession lay before the bold heart and the ruthless hand. By the republic every form of wealth and enjoyment was offered to men who had begun life in the condition of beings chained to the ground, and who could never have hoped to change their toil but for the grave. But the barrier was now cast down, and all were free to rush in. The treasury of national honours was suddenly flung open, and all might share the spoil. This was the true secret of the astonishing power of the Revolution. The man who was nothing to-day might be everything to-morrow. The serf might be a statesman, the conscript might be a captain, a colonel, a general before the Austrian or Prussian soldier could be a corporal. Who can wonder at the march of France, or the flight of her enemies?

CHAPTER XL.

Although every night now produced a debate, and the demand on the activity and vigilance of ministers was incessant and overwhelming, the great debates in both Houses were few in comparison with those of later times. In those

pitched battles of the parties, their whole strength was mustered from every quarter; the question was long announced; and its decision was regarded as giving the most complete measure of the strength of the cabinet and opposition. One of those nights came, unfortunately for ministers, on the very day in which the bulletin arrived announcing the signature of the first Austrian armistice. The passage of the Tyrol had stripped Austria of its mountain barrier. Terror had done the rest, and the armistice was signed within three marches of Vienna! The courier who had been sent to the Austrian ambassador, and had been permitted to pass through France, reported the whole nation to be in a frenzy of triumph. He had everywhere seen civic processions, military displays, and illuminations of the cities. The native pride of the people had risen to the utmost height of national enthusiasm; and Europe was pronounced by every Frenchman, from the directory to the postilion, to be at their feet.

The motion was in answer to a royal message on the continental subsidies. Nothing could have been more difficult than the topic at that juncture. Yet I never listened to Pitt with more genuine admiration. Fox, in his declamatory bursts, was superior to every speaker whom I have ever heard. His appearance of feeling was irresistible. But, if Fox was the most powerful of declaimers, Pitt was the mightiest master of the language of national council. He too could be occasionally glowing and imaginative; he could even launch the lighter weapons of sarcasm with singular dexterity; but his true rank was as the ruler of empire, and his true talent was never developed but when he spoke for the interests of empire.

On this night he was more earnest and more impressive than ever; the true description would have been, more *imperial*. He spoke less like a debater than like one who held the sceptre in his hand, and one who also felt that he was transmitting his wisdom as a parting legacy to a great people.

A portion of that speech, which ought never to be forgotten by the leaders of public affairs in England, as the champions of British freedom, was singularly vivid and powerful. Referring to the calumniated Revolution of

1688—"We now stand," said he, "almost in the same position with respect to France and Europe in which the government of William III. stood a century ago. We have only to substitute the democracy of France for the monarchy, and Europe enfeebled by the shocks of war, and still more enfeebled by perfidy, for Europe untouched and intrepid, awake to the ambition of the French king, and determined to meet him sword in hand. But the king of England was even then the guiding mind of Europe. I now demand, what was the redeeming policy of that pre-eminent sovereign? It was, never to despair of the triumph of principle; never to doubt of the ultimate fortunes of good in a contest with evil; and never to hesitate in calling upon a great and free people for the defence of that constitution which had made them great and free."

Those high-toned sentiments were received with loud cheers. Even opposition felt the natural force of the appeal, and the cheering was universal; party was forgotten for the time, and the name of England, and the revived glory of those illustrious days, bowed the whole House to the will of the great orator. In the midst of their enthusiasm, he took from the table a volume of the records, and read the final address of William to his Parliament,—the bequest of a dying king to the people whom he had rescued from slavery. This royal speech had evidently formed his manual of government, and certainly a nobler declaration never came from the throne.

"My lords and gentlemen,—I promise myself that you are met together with that just sense of the common danger of Europe, and that resentment of the late proceedings of the French king, which have been so fully and universally expressed in the loyal and seasonable addresses of my people." In allusion to the French plan of universal monarchy in the reign of Louis XIV., the speech pronounced that the alliance of Spain was the commencement of a system for subjugating Europe. "It is fit," said the king, "that I should tell you that the eyes of all Europe are upon this parliament—all matters are at a stand until your resolutions are known; and therefore no time ought to be lost.

"You have yet an opportunity, by God's blessing, to

secure to yourselves and your posterity the quiet enjoyment of your religion and liberties, if you are not *wanting to yourselves*, but will exert the utmost vigour of the English nation. But I tell you plainly that if you do not lay hold of this occasion you have no reason to hope for another." One of the measures proposed was for the maintenance of the public good faith. "I cannot but press upon you," said the king, "to take care of the public credit, which cannot be preserved but by keeping sacred the maxim that *they shall never be losers* who trust to parliamentary security.

"Let me conjure you to disappoint the only hopes of your enemies by your unanimity. I have shown, and will always show, how desirous I am to be the common father of all my people: do you, in like manner, lay aside parties and divisions; let there be no other distinction heard of amongst us but of those who are for the Protestant religion and the present establishment, and of those who mean a Popish prince and a French government.

"I shall only add this,—that if you do, in good earnest, desire to see England hold the balance of Europe, and to be indeed at the head of the Protestant interest, it will appear by the present opportunity."

Daylight shone on the windows of St. Stephen's before the debate closed. The minister had retired immediately after his exhausting speech, and left his friends to sustain the combat. It was long and fierce; but opposition was again baffled, and the division gave us a lingering majority. It was now too late, or too early, to go to rest; and I had returned to my official apartments, to look over some returns required for the next council, when my friend the secretary opened my door. His countenance looked care-worn, and for a few moments after he had sat down he remained in total silence.

This was so unlike the cheerful spirit of former times—times in which he had seemed to defy, or almost to enjoy, the struggles of pubic life—that I began to express alarm for his health. But he interrupted me by a look of the deepest distress, and the words "Pitt is dying." No words could be fuller of ill omen, and my anxiety was equal to his own. "My meaning," said he, "is not that he must die to-day,

or to-morrow, or in six months, or perhaps in a year, but that the statesman is dead. He must speak no more, act no more, and even think no more, or he must go to his grave. This night has finished the long supremacy of the noblest mind that ever ruled the councils of this country. William Pitt may live, but the minister has finished his days."

"Yet," I remarked, "I never heard him more animated or more impressive than on this night. He absolutely broke down all resistance."

"True—yet I conveyed him from the House fainting. I have sat, along with his physician, at his bedside ever since, applying restoratives to him, with scarcely a hope of recovery. His career is unquestionably at an end, but his name is powerful still; and though another trial of his powers in parliament would cost him his life, still, as the head of the cabinet, he might effect, for a while, all the principal purposes of an administration."

I doubted the "possibility of encountering the present strength of opposition," reinforced as it was by calamity abroad, and asked whether any expedient was contemplated to restore the public fortunes on the Continent.

"Every point of that kind has been long since considered," was the answer. "Our alliances have all failed, and we are now reproached, not simply with the folly of paying for inefficient help, but with the cruelty of dragging the states of Europe into a contest where to be crushed was inevitable."

I still urged an inquiry into the strength of states which had never been sharers in the war. "If the minor German powers have been absorbed, if Prussia has abandoned the cause, if Austria has fought in vain, is the *world* included in Germany?" I threw the map of Europe on the table. "Russia alone has an army of half a million, yet she has never fired a shot." Still I found it difficult to convince my fellow-minister.

"Russia, jealous, ambitious, and Asiatic,—Russia, with the eastern world for her natural field,—what object can she have in relieving the broken powers of the Continent? Must she not rather rejoice in the defeats and convulsions which leave them at her mercy?" I still continued to

urge him. "Rely upon it, it is to the North that we must look for the reinforcement. If the counsels of Catharine were crafty, the counsels of her successor may be sincere. Catharine thought only of the seizure of Turkey; Paul may think only of the profits of commerce."

"Still, Marston, I am at a loss to know by what influence a British government could urge a Russian throne into a contest a thousand miles from its frontier, in which it can gain no accession of territory, and but little accession of military fame: and all this while it is itself perfectly secure from all aggression."

"All true; but remember the striking commencement of Voltaire's Memoir of Peter—'Who could have pretended to say, in the year 1700, that a magnificent and polished court would be formed at the extremity of the Gulf of Finland; that the inhabitants of Cazan and the banks of the Wolga would be ranked among disciplined warriors, and, after beating the Turk and the Swede, gain victories in Germany; that a desert of two thousand leagues in length should, in the space of fifty years, extend its influence to all the European courts; and that, in 1759, the most zealous patron of literature in Europe should be a Russian sovereign? The man who had said this would have been regarded as the most chimerical mortal on earth.' Yet," said I, "all this has been done, and the career is not closed. More may be done still."

A month passed, of perpetual difficulty in the cabinet, of ill news from abroad, and of violent discontents among the people. But a new scene was reserved for me. Casual as had been my conversation with the secretary of state, it was not forgotten: it had been related to the minister, and it so far coincided with the conceptions of a mind which seemed to comprehend every chance of human things, that I was shortly sent for to enter into the necessary explanations. The result was the offer of a mission to St. Petersburg. The proposal was so unexpected that I required time for my answer. I must abandon high employment at home for a temporary distinction abroad; my knowledge of Russia was slight; the character of the Czar was eccentric; and the success of an embassy dependent on the most capricious of mankind was ob-

viously so uncertain that the result might strip me of whatever credit I already possessed.

But there was one authority to which I always appealed. I placed the proposal in the hands of Clotilde, and she settled all my doubts at once by declaring "that it was the appointment which, if she had been suffered to choose, she would have selected, in preference to all others, for its honour and its services." I had no power to resist such pleadings, seconded as they were by the rosiest smiles and the most beaming eyes. But Clotilde was still the woman, and I only valued her the more for it.

"But, Clotilde, how will you reconcile your tastes to the wild habits of Russia, and even to the solemn formalities of a northern court?"

"They both present themselves to me with the charm at once of novelty and recollection. From my nursery days the names of Peter, Catharine, and their marvellous city, rang in the ears of all Paris. Romance had taken refuge at the pole; Voltaire, Buffon, D'Alembert—all the wit and all the philosophy of France—satirized the French court under the disguise of Russian panegyric; and St. Petersburg was to us the modern Babylon—a something compounded of the wildness of a Scythian desert, and the lustre of a Turkish tale."

The ministerial note had been headed "most secret and confidential," and as such I had regarded it. But I soon saw the difficulty of keeping a "state secret." I had scarcely sent in my acceptance of the appointment when I found a letter on my table from my old Israelite friend Mordecai, congratulating me on "my decision." It was in his usual abrupt style:—

"I was aware of the minister's offer to you within twelve hours after it was made. I should have written at once, urging its acceptance; but I preferred leaving your own judgment to settle the question. Still I can give you some personal knowledge on the subject of Russia. I have been there during the last six months. My daughter—for what purpose I have never been able to ascertain—took a sudden whim of hating Switzerland and loving the snows and deserts of the North. But I have known the sex too long ever to think of combating their wills by argument.

The only chance of success is to give way to them. Mariamne, sick of hills and valleys, and unable to breathe in the purest air of the globe, determined to try the exhalations from the marshes of the Neva. But she is my child after all—the only being for whom I live—and I was peculiarly grateful that she had not fixed on Siberia, or taken a resolution to live and die at Pekin. I do not regret my journey. It has thrown a new light on me. I must acknowledge to you that I was astonished at Russia. I had known it in early life, and thought that I knew it well. But it is singularly changed. The spirit of the people—the country—the throne itself—have undergone the most remarkable of silent revolutions, and the most effective of all.

"Russia is now Russia no longer; she is Greece, Germany, France, and she will yet be England. Her politics and her faculties alike embrace the civilized world. She is Greece in her subtlety, Germany in her intelligence, and France in her ambition. St. Petersburg is less the capital of her empire, though of all capitals the most magnificent, than an emblem of her mind.

"I am now in London for a week. Come, and you will find me in my den."

I visited him "in his den;" and it deserved the name as much as ever. I found Mordecai immersed in day-books and ledgers, and calculating the exchanges with as much anxiety as if he were not worth a shilling. But his look was more languid than before, and his powerful eye seemed to have sunk deeper beneath his brow.

"You are probably surprised at seeing me here," said he; "but I have more reason than ever to be here. There is a time for all things, but not if we throw it away. My last journey through Poland has revived my zeal in behalf of my nation; and as years advance on me, like the rest of the world, I find that I must only exert myself the more."

"But, Mordecai, you are opulent; you can have no necessity for abandoning the natural indulgences of life. You will only shorten your days by this toil. At least, why do you linger in this dungeon?"

He smiled grimly. "It *is* a dungeon, and I only value it the more. To this dungeon, as you call it, come, day by

day, some of the haughtiest names in the land. It is my pride—it is my power—it is my revenge."

His visage assumed so completely the expression which I had always imagined for Shylock, that I should scarcely have been surprised if I had seen him produce the knife and the scales.

"You are surprised at all this," said he, after a pause, in which he fixed his searching eyes on me. "I see by your countenance that you think me a Goth, a monster, a savage. But I think myself none of those things. I am a man, and if I am not much deceived, I am also a philosopher. My life has been a perpetual struggle through a world where every one worships self. My nation are scorned, and they struggle too. The Jew has been injured, not by the individual alone, but by all mankind; and has he not a right to his revenge? He has at last found the means. He is now absorbing the wealth of all nations. With the wealth he will have the power; and another half century will not elapse before all the grand questions of public counsel—nay, of national existence—must depend on the will of the persecuted sons of Abraham. Who shall rise, or who shall fall—who shall make war, or who shall obtain peace—what republic shall be created, or what monarchy shall be rent in pieces—will henceforth be the questions, not of cabinets, but of the 'Change. There are correspondences within this escritoire worth all the wisdom of all the ministers on earth. There are commands at the point of this pen which the proudest statesmanship dares not controvert. There is in the chests round you a ruler more powerful than ever before held the sceptre—the dictator of the globe—the true despot,—gold."

After this wild burst he sank into silence, until, to change the fever of his thoughts, I inquired for the health of his daughter. The father's heart overcame him again.

"My world threatens to be a lonely one, Mr. Marston," said he in a feeble voice. "You see a heart-broken man. Forgive the bitterness with which I have spoken. Mariamne, I fear, is dying; and what is wealth now to me? I have left her in Poland among my people. She seemed to feel some slight enjoyment in wandering from place to place; but her last letter tells me that she is wearied of travelling, and has

made up her mind to live and die where she may be surrounded by her unhappy nation. I remain here only to wind up my affairs, and in a week I quit England—and for ever."

But a new object caught my glance. Mordecai—who, while he was thus speaking in paroxysms of alternate indignation and sorrow, had never for a moment ceased to turn over his books and boxes—had accidentally shaken a pile of tin cases from its pinnacle, and the whole rolled down at my feet. On one of them I saw, but with no very strong surprise, the words "Mortgage—Mortimer Castle." he eyes of both glanced in the same direction.

"There," said the Israelite, "you have your paternal acres in your hand; your Plantagenet forests and your Tudor Castle, all in a cubic foot. On the chair where you are now sitting, your lordly brother sat yesterday, gathering up his skirts from the touch of everything round him, and evidently suffering all the torture of a man of fashion forced to smile on the holder of his last mortgage. He is ruined, not worth a sixpence; Melton and Newmarket have settled that question for him. But do you recognize this hand?" He drew a letter from his portfolio. I knew the writing: it was from my mother, on whom, now old and feeble, this accomplished *roué* had been urging the sale of her jointure. Helpless and alone, she had consented to this fatal measure; and my noble brother's visit to the Israelite had been for the purpose of inducing him to make the purchase.

I started up in indignation, declared that the result must reduce my unfortunate parent to beggary, and demanded by what means I could possibly prevent what was "neither more nor less than an act of plunder."

"I see no means," said Mordecai, coolly, "except your making the purchase yourself, and thus securing the jointure to her ladyship. It is only ten thousand pounds."

"I make the purchase! I have not the tenth part of the money upon earth. I ask *you*, what *is* to be done?"

"Your brother has here the power of selling, and will sell, if the starvation of fifty mothers stood in his way. But I have refused the purchase; and it was chiefly on this subject that I was induced to invite you to my 'dungeon,' as you not unjustly term it."

The picture of a mother, of whom I had always thought

with the tenderness of a child, cast out in her old age to poverty, with the added bitterness of being thus cast out by her reliance on the honour of a cruel and treacherous son, rose so painfully before my eyes, that I lost all power of suggesting the remedy, and could only look the distress which I felt. Mordecai gazed on me with an inquiring countenance.

"You love this mother, Mr. Marston. You are a good son. We Israelites, with all our faults, respect the feelings which 'honour the father and mother.' It is a holy love, and well earned by the cares and sorrows of parentage." He paused, and covered his forehead with his gigantic hands. I could hear him murmur the name of his daughter. A loud knocking, which announced a fashionable arrival at his door, startled him from his reverie.

Suddenly, again bustling among his papers, he said, "This is the hour when your brother was to call for my definite answer. Now listen to me. The jointure must be purchased,"—I bit my lip, but he did not leave me long in suspense—"and *you* shall be the purchaser." He wrote a cheque for the amount, and placed it in my hand.

"Mordecai, you are a noble fellow. But how am I to act upon this? I am worth nothing. I might as well attempt to repay millions."

"Well so be it, Mr. Marston. You are a man of honour and a good son. You will repay it when you can. I exact but one condition: that you will come and visit Mariamne and me in Poland."

The opening of the hall-door put an end to our interview.

"That is your brother," said he. "You must not see him, as I choose to keep the name of the purchaser to myself. Take your mother's letter with you, and give her my best advice to write no more—at least, to such correspondents as his lordship."

I rose to take my leave. He followed me hastily, and, holding me by my hand, said, "Another condition I have to make. It is, that not a syllable of all that has passed between us on this subject shall be suffered to transpire. I should make but a bad figure on 'Change if I were suspected of transactions in that style. Remember, it must be a profound secret to all the world."

"Even to my wife?" I asked. "Is *she* included?"

"No, no," he replied, with a faint laugh; "I look upon you as a mere mortal still. All vows are void in their nature which require impossibilities in their execution." We parted.

I told my little city tale to Clotilde, and we pledged ourselves to find out his Mariamne, in whatever corner of the Lithuanian wilderness she might have hidden her fantastic heart and head. But I had now another duty. Within a few hours we were on our way to the jointure-house. I found my mother less enfeebled than I had expected, and still affectionate and tender, as she had always been, to her long-absent son. She was still fully susceptible of the honours which had now opened before me. Clotilde almost knelt before her noble air and venerable beauty. My mother could not grow weary with gazing on the expressive countenance of my beautiful wife. I had secured my parent's comfort for life, and I too was happy.

CHAPTER XLI.

My reception at St. Petersburg was most distinguished; I had arrived at a fortunate period. The French expedition to Egypt had alarmed the Russian councils for Constantinople, a possession to which every Russian looks, in due time, as naturally as to the right of his copecks and caftan. But the victory of Aboukir, which had destroyed the French fleet, again raised the popular exultation, and English heroism was the topic of every tongue. The incomparable campaign of the Russian army in Italy, the recovery, in three months, of all which it had cost the power of France, and the genius of her greatest general, in two years of pitched battles, sanguinary sieges, artful negotiation, and incessant intrigue, to obtain, excited the nation to the highest degree of enthusiasm, and the embassy basked in the broadest sunshine of popularity.

But all was not sunshine: the character of the sovereign in a despotism demands perpetual study; and Paul was freakish and headstrong beyond all human calculation. No man was more misunderstood at a distance, or less capable

of being understood near. He had some striking qualities. He was generous, bold, and high-principled; but the simplest accident would turn all those qualities into their reverse. The secret was in his brain: disease was gathering on his intellect, and he was daily becoming more dangerous to those nearest him. The result was long foreseen.

My position now became doubly anxious. Even despots love popularity, and the Czar was alternately furious and frightened at its loss. Guards were planted in every part of the city, with orders to disperse all groups. Every man who looked at the imperial equipage as it passed through the streets was in danger of being arrested as an assassin. Nobles were suddenly exiled, none knew why or where. The cloud was thickening round the palace. It is a perilous thing to be the one object on which every eye involuntarily turns as the source of public evil. Rumours of conspiracy rose, and died, and were heard again. In free governments, public discontents have room to escape, and they escape. In despotisms they have no room to evaporate, and they condense until they explode. St. Petersburg at length became a place of silence and solitude by day, and of murmurs and meetings by night. It reminded one of Rome in the days of Nero, and I looked with perpetual alarm for the catastrophe of Nero.

The Russian is a submissive man, and even capable of strong attachment to the throne; but there is no spot of the earth where national injury is more deeply resented, and Paul had been regarded as tarnishing the fame of Russia. Wherever Suwarrow came he was conqueror. In his whole career he had never been beaten. The soldiery told numberless tales of his eccentricity, laughed at, mimicked, and adored him. The nation honoured him as the national warrior.

But the failure of some of his detached corps in Switzerland had embarrassed the campaign, and Paul, capricious as the winds, hastily recalled him. The popular indignation now burst forth in every form of anger. Placards fixed at night on the palace walls, gipsy ballads sung in the streets, maskers at the countless balls of the nobles, satires in quaint verse, and national proverbs, showed the public resentment to be universal.

In the midst of this growing perplexity, the English messenger arrived. His tidings had been long anticipated, yet they came with the effect of a thunderclap. The cabinet had resigned. I of course now waited only the order to return.

Paul instantly cast off his old partialities. He pronounced England undone. The star of France was to be the light of the west, he himself to be the luminary of the east. The bold ambition of Catharine was to be realized, though without the system or the sagacity of her imperial genius. But Paul was soon to learn the terrible lesson of a despotic government. The throne, separated from the people, is the more in peril the more widely that it is separated. The people *would* not be carried along with their master to the feet of his new political idol. Paul, in the attempt to partition the globe, was narrowing his supremacy to his own sepulchre.

Yet this time of national gloom was the most splendid period of the court. With the double purpose of recovering his popularity and concealing his negotiations, Paul plunged into the most extraordinary festivity. Balls, masquerades, and *fêtes* succeeded each other with restless extravagance. But the contrast of the saturnine emperor with the sudden change of his court was too powerful. It bore the look of desperation, though for what purpose was still a mystery to the million. I heard many a whisper among the diplomatic circle, that this whirl of life, this taste for fierce dissipation, was, in all Russian reigns, the sure precursor of a catastrophe, though none could yet venture to predict its nature.

Even I, with all my English disregard of the speculative frivolities which to the foreigner are substance and facts, was startled by the increasing glare of those hurried and feverish festivities. The fifth act was preparing, and the curtain was to fall on the death of nobles and kings.

The impression that evil was to come already seemed to be universal. Rumours of popular conspiracy, fresh discoveries by the police, and new tales of imperial eccentricity, kept the public mind in constant fretfulness. At length I received the formal communication of a "challenge" from the Czar to my sovereign, along with all the other crowned heads of Europe, to meet him in a *champ-clos*, and,

sword in hand, decide the quarrels of nations. With this despatch came an invitation for the whole diplomatic body to a masquerade! in which all were commanded to appear as knights in armour—the Czar, as grand-master of the order of Malta, exhibiting himself in the panoply in which he was to settle the disputes of mankind.

Perplexities like those form a large share of the trials of the foreign ambassador. To attend the *fête* was embarrassing, but to decline the invitation would have been equivalent to demanding my passports. And I must acknowledge that if the eye was to be gratified by the most superb and the most curious of all displays, never was there an occasion more fitted for its indulgence. All the armouries of Europe and of Asia seemed to have been searched for the arms and ornaments of this assemblage. The Kremlin had given up its barbaric shields and caps of bronze. We had the plate-mail of the crusader, the gold-inlaid morions and cuirasses of France, the silver chain-mail of the Circassian, the steel corslet of the German chivalry. Those, with a whole host of the various and rich equipments of the Greek, the Hungarian, the Moresco, and the Turcoman, made the Winter Palace a blaze of knighthood. Yet to me, after the first excitement, the whole conveyed a deep impression of melancholy.

I was aroused from my reluctant reverie by the approach of a group of masks, who came dancing towards the recess whither I had retired, wearied with the general glitter and the tumult of the *fête*. One of the casements opened into the famous Conservatory, and I sat enjoying the scents of the thousand flowers and shrubs of perhaps the finest collection in the world. Suddenly, as if to avert suspicion, one of the group struck up a popular air on the little three-stringed guitar, which throws the Russian crowd into such ecstasies; and they began to dance, accompanying it by a murmured chorus, which soon convinced me of the dangerous neighbouring into which I had fallen. The words became well-known afterwards.

My conviction was complete when, in the whirl of the dance, a small roll of paper dropped from the robe of one of the maskers and fell at my feet. In taking it up to return it to him, I saw that it was a list of names, and, at the

head, a name which, from private information, I knew to be involved in dark political purposes. The thought flashed across me, in connection with the chorus which I had just heard, that the paper was of too much importance to be suffered to leave my possession. The life of the sovereign might be involved. The group, who had been evidently startled by my sudden appearance among them, now surrounded me, and the loser of the paper insisted on its instant surrender. The violence of his demand only confirmed my resolution. He grew more agitated still, and the group seized me. I laid my hand upon my sword. This measure stopped them for the moment. But in the next I saw a knife brandished in the air, and felt myself wounded in the arm. My attempt to grasp the weapon had alone saved me from its being buried in my heart. But the fracas now attracted notice; a crowd pressed towards us, and the group suddenly scattered away, leaving me still in possession of the paper.

My wound bled, and I felt faint, and desired to be led into the open air. My mask was taken off; and this was scarcely done when I heard my name pronounced, and saw the welcome countenance of my friend Guiscard by my side. As he supported me to my equipage, I communicated the circumstances of the rencontre to his clear and generous heart, and he fully agreed with me on the duty of instantly apprizing the Czar of his probable danger. As I was unable to move through pain and feebleness, he offered to take the list with him, and demand an interview with the sovereign himself, if possible; or if not, with the governor of the palace. The paper contained not only names of individuals, all, long before, objects of public suspicion, but a sketch of the imperial apartments, and, at the bottom, the words "Three hours after midnight." I looked at my watch: it was already half-past two. This might or might not be the appointed night for this dreadful business; but, if it were, there was but one half-hour between the throne and the grave.

Guiscard hurried off, leaving me in the deepest anxiety, but promising to return as speedily as in his power. But he came not. My anxiety grew intolerable; hour after hour passed away, while I reckoned minute after minute as

if they were so much drained from my own existence. Even if I had been able to move, it was impossible to know where to follow him. His steps might have been watched. Doubtless the conspirators were on the alert to prevent any approach to the palace. He might have fallen by the pistol of some of those men who had not scrupled to conspire against their monarch. The most miserable of nights at length wore away; but it was only to be succeeded by the most fearful of mornings. The career of Paul was closed! On the entrance of the chamberlains into his sleeping apartment, the unhappy Czar was found dead. There could be no doubt that he had perished by treason. A scarf was still drawn tight round his throat. He had been strangled. The intelligence no sooner spread through the capital than it produced a burst of national sorrow. All his errors were forgotten. All his good qualities were remembered.

But where was my gallant and excellent friend—Guiscard? Of him I heard nothing.

Another week of suspense, and he appeared. His history was of the most singular kind. On the night when I had last seen him he had made his way through all obstacles into the palace, and been promised a private interview with the Czar. But while he urged that no time should be lost, he had sufficient proof that there could be no chance of an interview. A succession of apologies was made: 'the Czar was at supper'—'he was engaged with the minister'—'he had gone to rest.' In total hopelessness of communicating his pressing intelligence in person, he at length consented to seal the roll, and place it in the hands of one of the officers of rank in the household. But that officer himself was in the conspiracy. The paper was immediately destroyed; and the bearer of it was considered to be too dangerous to be sent back.

He was put under arrest in an apartment of the palace, and told that his life depended on his silence. But within the week the revolution was complete, and he was set at liberty. A new monarch, a new government, a new feeling, followed this dangerous act. The empire felt relieved, and Russia began the most glorious period of her national history.

My mission was now at an end. I took my leave of the Russian court with a most gracious audience of its new monarch. Of his own country he expressed himself with candour. "I feel," said he, "that I have a great trust laid on me, and I am determined to fulfil it. I shall not make the throne a bed of roses. There is still much to be done, and I shall do what I can. I have the advantage of a fine material in the people. No being is at once more susceptible of improvement, and more grateful for it, than the Russian. He has quick faculties and an honest heart. If the common hazards of empire should come, I know that he will not desert me. In the last extremity of human fortunes I shall not desert him."

Those generous declarations were gallantly realized on both sides within a few years. I was not then aware that the imperial prediction would be soon brought to the test. But it was gloriously fulfilled in the flames of Moscow, and proudly registered on the fallen throne of Napoleon.

Impatient as I was to reach England, I left St. Petersburg with regret. Clotilde left it with those feelings which belong to the finer fancy of woman. As we drove along the banks of the Neva, she more than once stopped the carriage to give herself a parting glance at the long vista of stately buildings, which she was then to look upon, perhaps, for the last time.

The Neva was covered with barges of the most graceful form; the fronts of the citizens' houses were hung with decorations; music sounded from a vast orchestra in front of the palace; and the air re-echoed with the voices of thousands and tens of thousands, all evidently determined to be happy for the time. We both gazed in silence and admiration. The carriage had accidentally drawn up in view of the little hut which is still preserved in the Neva as the dwelling of Peter. I saw a tear glistening on the long eyelash of my lovely fellow-traveller.

"If I wanted a proof," said she, "of the intellectual greatness of man, I should find it in this spot. I may see in that hut the emblem of his mind. That a Russian, two centuries ago—almost before the name of Russia was known in Europe—while its court had scarcely emerged from the feuds of barbarous factions, and its throne had

been but just rescued from the hands of the Tartar—should have conceived the design of such an empire, and should have crowned his design with such a capital, is to me the most memorable effort of a ruling mind within all human recollection."

We passed rapidly through the Russian provinces, but as we drove along the smooth sands which line so many leagues of the Baltic, we were startled by the roar of guns from the ramparts of Riga, followed by the peal of bells. The intelligence at length broke on us at the gates; and it was well worth all our interest. "Peace with France." The English ambassador had arrived in Paris. "War was at an end, and the world was to be at rest once more." I changed my route immediately, and flew on the road to Paris.

My life was destined to be a succession of "scenes." It had been thrown into a whirl of memorable incidents, any one of which would have served for the tumult of fifty years, and for the meditation of the fifty after. But this was the period of powerful, sometimes of terrible, vicissitudes. All ranks of men were reached by them. Kings and statesmen only felt them first; they penetrated to the peasant. The Continent underwent a moral convulsion.

I found France in a state of the highest exultation. The national cry was, "that she had covered herself with glory;" and to earn that cry, probably, no Frenchman who ever existed would hesitate to march to Timbuctoo or swim across the Atlantic. The name of "conquest" is a spell which no brain from Calais to Bayonne has ever thought of resisting.

But it will be impossible to tell future ages the scene which France then presented to the mind. If objects are capable of record, impressions are beyond the power of the pen. No image can be conveyed to posterity of the sensations which crowded on Europe in the course of the French Revolution—the rapidity, the startling lustre, and the deep despair as it went forth crushing all that the earth had of solid or sacred. It was now only in its midway. The pause had come, but it was only the pause in the hurricane; the still heavier trial was at hand. Even as a stranger I could see that it was but a lull.

But my curiosity was fixed on the one man who had been the soul of the transformation. I have before my eye at this moment his slender and *spirituel* figure; his calm, but most subtle glance; and the incomparable expression of his smile. His face was then classic—the *ideal* of thought; and when Canova afterwards transferred it to marble, he could not have made it less like flesh and blood. It was intensely pale—pure, profound, Italian.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHANGE is the master-spirit of Europe, as permanency is of Asia. The contrast is in the nature of things. However the caprice, the genius, or the necessities of the sitter on the throne may attempt to impress permanency on the habits of the West, or mutability on those of the East, his success must be but partial.

But the most rapid and total change within human memory was the one which was now before my eye. I had left Paris a democracy. I found it a despotism. I had left it a melancholy prey to the multitude,— a startling theatre of alternate fury and dejection, of cries for revenge and supplications for bread, of the tyranny of the mob and the misery of the nation. I now find it the most striking contrast to that scene of despair;—Paris the headquarters of a military government; the Tuileries the palace of a conqueror; every sound martial; the eye dazzled everywhere by the spoils of the German and Italian sovereignties; the nation flushed with victory.

In the midst of military splendour there was a wild, haggard, and unhappy character stamped on all things. The streets of the capital had not yet felt the influence of that imperial taste which was to render it an imperial city. I saw the same shattered suburbs, the same deep, narrow, and winding streets, the same dismal lanes, in which I had witnessed so often the gatherings of the armed multitude, and which seemed made for popular commotion.

The Palais Royal was still the chief scene of all Parisian vitality. But the mob orators were to be found there no more. The walks and *cafés* were now crowded with bold

figures, epauletted and embroidered, laughing and talking with the easy air of men who felt themselves masters, and who evidently regarded everything round them as the furnishing of a camp.'

The land had now undergone its third stage of that great spell by which nations are urged and roused at the will of a few. The crosier was the first wand of the magician, then came the sceptre; we were now under the spell of the sword. I was delighted at the change from the horrid form of popular domination to the showy supremacy of soldiership. It still had its evils. But the guillotine had disappeared.

The foreigner shapes everything into the picturesque, and all the picturesque of France was now military. Every regiment which passed through Paris on its way from the frontier was reviewed, in front of the palace, by the First Consul; and those reviews formed the finest of all military spectacles, for each had a character and a history of its own.

The regiment which had stormed the bridge of Lodi; the regiment which had headed the assault on the *tête-du-pont* at Mantua; the regiment which had led the march at the passage of the St. Bernard; the regiment which had formed the advance of Dessaix at Marengo,—all had their separate distinctions, and were received with glowing speeches and appropriate honours by the chief of the state. The popular vanity was flattered by a perpetual pageant, and that pageant wholly different from the tinsel displays of the monarchy:—no representation of legends, trivial in their origin and ridiculous in their memory, but the revival of transactions in which every man of France felt almost a personal interest, which were the true principles of the new system, and whose living actors were seen passing, hour by hour, before the national eye. All was vivid reality where all had been false glitter in the days of the Bourbons, and all sullenness and fear in the days of the democracy. Nothing could be more subtly consecutive than the whole progress of the head of the government.

At this period he was palpably training the Republic to the sight of a dictatorship. The return of the troops through Paris had already accustomed the populace to the sight of military power.

The movement of vast masses of men by a word, the simplicity of the great military machine, its direct obedience to the master-hand, and its tremendous strength, all were a continual lesson to the popular mind. I looked on the progress of this lesson with infinite interest; for, in its first displays, I thought that I was about to see a new government—republicanism in its most majestic aspect, giving a new development of the art of ruling man, and exhibiting a shape of domination loftier and more energetic than the world had ever yet seen. Still I was aware of the national weakness. Nor was I without a strong suspicion of the hazard of human advance when intrusted to the caprice of any being in the form of man, and, above all, of one who had won his way to power by arms.

Those were the days of speculation, and I indulged in them like the rest of the world. All was strange, undefined, and startling. One thing alone seemed certain: that the past *régime* was gone, never to return; that a great barrier had suddenly been dropped between the two sovereignties; that the living generation stood on the dividing pinnacle between the languid vices of the extinguished system and the daring, perhaps guilty, energies of the system to come. Behind me lay the region of the past, the long level of wasted national faculties, emasculating superstitions, the graceful feebleness of a sensual nobility, and the superb follies of a haughty and yet helpless throne. Before me rose a realm of boundless extent, but requiring frames of vigour and feelings undismayed by difficulty, and where every struggle with the rudeness of the soil or the roughness of the elements must enhance the vigour of the nerve that encountered them.

Those were dreams; with all my sense of its fickleness, I had not made due allowance for the nature of the foreign mind. I was yet to learn its ready temptation by every triviality of the hour, its demand of extravagant excitement to rouse it into action, and its utter apathy where its passions were not bribed.

Every day in the capital now had its celebration, and all exhibited the taste and talent of the First Consul; but one characteristic *fête* at length woke me to the true de-

sign of this extraordinary man, the inauguration of the Legion of Honour. It was the first step to the throne, and a step of incomparable daring and dexterity; it was the virtual restoration of an aristocracy in the presence of a people who had raved with the rage of frenzy against all titles, had torn down the coats-of-arms from the gates of the noblesse, and shattered even the marbles of their sepulchres. Republicanism had been already "pushed from its stool," but this was the chain which was to keep it fixed to the ground.

The ceremonial was held in the Hôtel des Invalides, and all the civil pomp of the consulate was combined with all the military display. The giving of the crosses of honour called forth in succession the names of all those soldiers whose exploits had rung through Europe, in the campaigns of the Alps and the Rhine. Nothing could be more in the spirit of a fine historic picture, or in the semblance of a fine antique drama.

It was not difficult to see that this day was the consecration of France to absolute power, and of all her faculties to conquest. Like the Roman herald, she had put on, in the temple, the robe of defiance to all nations. She was to be, from this day of devotement, the nation of war. It was less visible that upon the field of Marengo perished the Democracy, than that in this temple was sacrificed the Republic. The throne was still only in vision; but its outline was clear, and that outline was colossal.

In my intercourse with the men of the new *régime*, I had associated chiefly with the military. One of those, a colonel of dragoons, who had served with Moreau, and whose partialities, at least, did not lean to the rival hero, came hurriedly to me, at an early hour one morning, to "take his leave." "I grieve to tell you," added my gallant friend, with more of gravity than I thought he could possibly have thrown into his good-humoured features, "that we are to have war. The matter is perfectly determined in the Tuileries; and at the levee to-day there will probably be a *scene*. In the mean time, take my information as certain, and prepare for your return to England with the shortest possible delay." He took his departure.

I attended the levee on that memorable day, and saw

the *scene*. The Place du Carrousel was unusually crowded with troops, which the First Consul was passing in review. The whole population seemed to have conjectured the event of the day; for I had never seen them in such numbers, or with such an evident look of general anxiety. The Tuileries was filled with officers of state, with leading military men, and members of the senate and tribunate; the whole body of the foreign ambassadors were present; and yet the entire assemblage was kept waiting until the First Consul had inspected even the firelocks of his guard, and the shoes in their knapsacks. The diplomatists, as they saw from the casements of the palace this tardy operation going on, exchanged glances with each other at its contemptuous trifling. Some of the *militaires* exhibited the impatience of men accustomed to prompt measures; the civilians smiled and shrugged their shoulders; but all felt that there was a purpose in the delay.

At length the drums beat the flourish for the close of the review; the First Consul galloped up to the porch of the palace, flung himself from his charger, sprang up the staircase, and, without regard to etiquette, hurried into the *salle*, followed by a cloud of aides-de-camp and chamberlains. The circle of presentations was formed, and he walked hastily round it, saying a few rapid words to each. I observed, for the first time, an aide-de-camp moving on the outside of the circle, step for step, and with his eye steadily marking the gesture of each individual to whom the First Consul spoke in his circuit. This was a new precaution, and indicative of the time. Till then he had run all risks, and might have been the victim of any daring hand. But now, whether from an affectation of hazard, or from some of those stories of conspiracy which were the *trade* of the *police*, he was thus on his guard. The very countenance of the First Consul was as characteristic as his career. It exhibited the most unusual contrast of severity and softness; nothing could be sterner than the gathering of his brow, nothing more flattering than his smile. On this occasion I saw them both in perfection. To the general diplomatic circle his lip wore the smile. But when he reached the spot where the British ambassador stood, we had the storm at once. With his darkest

frown, and with every feature in agitation, he suddenly burst out into a tirade against England—reproaching her with contempt of treaties; with an absolute desire for war; with a perpetual passion for embroiling Europe; with forming armaments in the midst of peace; with challenging France to an encounter which must provoke European hostilities; with the arrogant ambition of ruling the globe!

The English ambassador listened in silence, but with the air of a high-spirited man who would concede nothing to menace, and with the countenance of an intelligent one who could have easily answered declamation by argument. But for this answer there was no time. The First Consul, having delivered his diatribe, suddenly sprang round, darted through the crowd, and was lost to the view. That scene was decisive. War was inevitable. I took my friend's advice, ordered post-horses, and within the twenty-four hours I saw with infinite delight the cliffs of Dover shining in the dawn.

The war began; it was unavoidable. The objects of our great adversary have been since stripped of all disguise. His system had been to lull England by peace, until he had amassed a force which might crush her at the outbreak of a war. But his passion overcame his policy. There are higher impulses acting on the world than human ambition; the great machine is not altogether guided by man. England had the cause of nations in her charge; her principles were truth, honour, and justice. I saw Napoleon at the head of 500,000 men on the Niemen; I saw him reduced to 50,000 on the plains of Champagne; I saw him reduced to a brigade at Fontainebleau; I saw him a burlesque of empire at Elba, and I saw him an exile on board a British ship departing from Europe to obscurity and his grave.

Those things may well reconcile inferior talents to their obscurity. But they should also teach nations that the love of conquest is national ruin, and that there is a power which avenges the innocent blood. No country on earth requires that high moral more than France, and no country on earth has more bitterly suffered for its perversion. Napoleon was embodied France,—the concentrated spirit of her wild ambition, of her furious love of conquest, of her reckless scorn of the sufferings and the rights of mankind.

Nobler principles have followed under a wiser rule. But if France draws the sword again in the spirit of Napoleon, she will exhibit to the world only the fate of Napoleon: it will be her last war.

On my arrival in England I found the public mind clouded with almost universal dejection. Pitt was visibly dying. He still held the nominal reins of government, but the blow had been struck, and his sole honour was now to be, that, like the Spartan of old, he died on the field, and with his buckler on his arm. I saw Pitt laid in his grave; I looked down into the narrow bed where slept all that was mortal of the man who virtually wielded the whole supremacy of Europe. Yet how little can man estimate the future! Napoleon was in his glory when Pitt was in his shroud. Yet how infinitely more honoured and more happy was the fate of him by whose sepulchre all that was noble and memorable in the living generation stood in reverence and sorrow, than the last hour of the prisoner of St. Helena!

Both were emblems of their nations:—the Englishman manly, pure, and bold, of unshaken firmness, of proud reliance on the resources of his own nature, and of lofty perseverance through good and through evil fortune; the foreigner dazzling and daring, of singular intellectual vividness, and of a thirst of power which disdained to be slaked but at sources above the ambition of all the past warriors and statesmen of Europe. Napoleon was the first who dreamed of fabricating anew the old Roman sceptre, and establishing an empire of the world. His game was for a prodigious stake, and, for a while, he played it with prodigious fortune. But, from the moment when he ceased to be the man of the Revolution, he lost the secret of his irresistible strength. As the head of the great Republic, making opinion his precursor, calling on the old wrongs of nations to level his way, and marshalling alike the newborn hopes and the ancient injuries of the continental kingdoms to fight his battles, the world lay before him, with all its barriers ready to fall at the first tread of his horse's hoof. As emperor, he forged his own chain.

Napoleon, the chieftain of republicanism, might have revolutionized Europe; Napoleon, the monarch, narrowed

his supremacy to the sweep of his sword. Fortunate for mankind that he committed this irecoverable error, and was content to be the lord of France instead of being the sovereign of opinion; for his nature was despotic, and his power must have finally shaped and massed itself into the most stupendous tyranny. Still he might have long influenced the fates and long excited the awe of Europe. We too might have worshipped his star, and have forgotten the danger of the flaming phenomenon in the rapidity and eccentricity of a course which we saw eclipsing the old luminaries in succession, until it touched our orbit and visited us in conflagration.

It was said that Pitt died of a broken heart, in despair of the prospects of England. The defeat of Austerlitz was pronounced his death-blow. What thoughts may cluster round the sleepless pillow, who shall tell? But no man knew England better; none had a bolder faith in her perseverance; none had a stronger reliance on her principle; none had more broadly laid the foundation of victory in national honour. I shall never be driven into the belief that William Pitt despaired of his country.

He died in the vigour of his genius, in the proudest struggle of the empire, in the midst of the deepest trial, which, for a thousand years, had demanded all the faculties of England. Yet what man within human recollection had lived so long, if we are to reckon life not by the calendar, but by triumphs? What minister of England, or what minister of Europe, but himself, was the head of a European government for three-and-twenty years? What man had attained so high a European rank? What mind had influenced so large an extent of European interests? What name was so instinctively pronounced by every nation as the first among mankind? To have earned distinctions like those was to have obtained all that time could give. Not half a century in years, Pitt's true age was patriarchal.]

I was now but a spectator. My connection with public life was broken off. I was still in Parliament, but I felt a loathing for public exertions.

I now retired from the tumult of London, and returned to tastes which I had never wholly forgotten, taking a small

residence within a few miles of this centre of the living world, and devoting my leisure to the enjoyments of that life which, in the purest days of man, was given to him as the happiest, "to dress the garden and keep it." Clotilde in all her tastes joined with mine, or rather led them, with the instinctive elegance of a female mind accomplished in every grace of education. We read, wrote, walked, talked, and pruned our rose-trees, and gathered our carnations and violets together.

She had already given me those pledges which, while they increase the anxiety, also increase the affection of wedded life. The education of our children was a new source of interest. They were handsome and healthy. Their little sports, the growth of their young perceptions, and the freshness of their ideas, renewed to us both all the delights of society without their exhaustion. And often, when, after a day spent in the smoke and bustle of the great city, I reached my rustic gate, heard the cheerful voices of the little population which rushed down the avenue to cling upon my neck, and stood at the door of my cottage, with my arm round the waist of my beautiful and fond wife, breathing the evening fragrance of a thousand blooms, and enjoying the cool air and the purple glories of the sky,—I often wondered why men should seek for happiness in any other scene; and felt gratitude, not the less sincere for its being calm and solemn, to the Giver of a lot so nearly approaching to human fulness of joy.

But the world rolls on, let who will slumber among its roses. The political world was awoke by a thunder-clap. Fox died. He was just six months a minister. Such is ambition, such is the world. He died, like Pitt, in the zenith of his powers. The lights which remained were many; but they were vague, feeble and scattered. The "leader of the starry host" was gone.

I cannot trust myself to speak of this distinguished man, for I was no Foxite. I regarded his policy in opposition as the pleadings of a powerful advocate with a vast retaining fee, a comprehensive cause, and a generous and confiding client. Popularity, popular claims, and the people, were all three made for him beyond all other men; and no advocate ever pleaded with more indefatigable zeal or more

resolute determination. But, raised to a higher position, higher qualities were demanded. But time was not given. His task had hitherto been easy. It was simply to stand a spectator on the shore, criticizing the manœuvres of a stately vessel struggling with the gale. The helm was at last put into his hand, and it was then that he felt the difference between *terra firma* and the wild and restless element which he was now to control. But he had scarcely set his foot on the deck when he too was swept away. On such brevity of trial it is impossible to judge. Time might have matured his vigour while it expanded his views; matchless as the casual leader of a party, he might then have been elevated into the acknowledged leader of a people. The singular daring, ardent sensitiveness, and popular ambition, which made him dangerous in a private station, might then have found their nobler employment, and been purified as he rose into the broad and lofty region of ministerial duty. He might have enlarged the partizan into the patriot, and, instead of being the great tempter of a populace, have been ennobled into the illustrious guide of an empire.

CHAPTER XLIII.

But the world never stands still. On the day when I returned from moralizing on the vanity of life over the grave of Fox, I received a letter, a trumpet-call to the *mêlée*, from Mordecai. It was enthusiastic, but its enthusiasm had now taken a bolder direction. "In abandoning England," he told me, "he had abandoned all minor and personal speculations, and was now dealing with the affairs of kingdoms." This letter gave only fragments of his views; but it was easy to see that he contemplated larger results than he ventured to trust to his pen. It was from Poland.

"You must come and see me here," said he, "for it is only here that you *can* see me as I ever desired to be seen, or, in fact, as nature made me. In your busy metropolis I was only one of the millions who were content to make a sort of a reptile existence, creeping on the ground, and

living on the chances of the day. Here I have thrown off my caterpillar life, and am on the wing—a human dragon-fly, if you will—darting at a thousand different objects, enjoying the broad sunshine, and speeding through the wide air. My invincible attachment to my nation here finds its natural object; for the sons of Abraham are here a *people*. I am here a patriarch, with my flocks and herds, my shepherds and clansmen, the sons of my tribe coming to do me honour, and my heart swelling and glowing with the prospects of national regeneration.

"You will speak of this as the vision of an old man—come to us, and you will see it a splendid reality. But observe that I expect no miracle. I leave visions to fanatics; and while I acknowledge the Power of Powers, which rides in clouds, and moves the world by means unknown to human weakness, I look also to the human means which have their place in speeding the wheels of the great system. The army which has broken down the strength of the Continent—the force which, like a whirlwind, has burst such tremendous chasms through the old domains of European power, and has torn up so many of the forest monarchs by the root—the French army, the greatest instrument of human change since the Gothic invasions, is now marching direct on Poland.

"I have seen the man who is at the head of that army—the most extraordinary being whom Europe has seen for a thousand years—the crowned basilisk of France. I own that we must beware of his fangs, of the blast of his nostrils, and the flash of his eye. He is a terrible production of nature; but he is on our side, and, even if he should be finally trampled, he will have first done our work. I have had an interview with Napoleon!—it was long and animated. He spoke to me as to the chief man of my nation, and I answered him in the spirit of the chief man. He acknowledged that the general change essential to the true government of Europe was incapable of being effected without the aid of our people. He spoke contemptuously of the impolicy by which we had been deprived of our privileges, and declared his determination to place us on a height from which we might move the world. But it was obvious to me that under those lofty declara-

tions there was a burning ambition; that if we were to move the world it was for him; and that, even then, we were not to move it for the monarch of France, but for the individual. I saw that *he* was then the dreamer. Yet his dream was the extravagance of genius."

In another portion of his letter he adverted to the means by which this great operation was to be effected.

"I have been for three days on the Vistula, gazing at the march of the 'Grand Army.' It well deserves the name. It is the mightiest mass of power ever combined under one head—half a million of men. The armies of Xerxes were gatherings of clowns compared to this incomparable display of soldiership; the armies of Alaric and Attila were hordes of savages in comparison; the armies of ancient Rome alone approached it in point of discipline, but the most powerful Roman army never reached a fifth of its number. I see at this moment before me the conquerors of the Continent, the brigades which have swept Italy, the bayonets and cannon which have broken down Austria, and extinguished Prussia. The eagles are now on the wing for a mightier prey."

This prediction was like the prayers of the Homeric heroes—

"One half the gods dispersed in empty air."

Poland was not to be liberated; the crisis was superb, but the weapon was not equal to the blow. It was the first instance in which the French emperor was found inferior to his fortune. With incomparable force of intellect, Napoleon wanted grandeur of mind. It has become the custom of later years to deny him even superiority of intellect; but the man who, in a contest open to all, goes before all—who converts a republic, with all its ardour, haughtiness, and passion, into a monarchy at once as rigid and as magnificent as an oriental despotism—who, in a country of warriors, makes himself the leading warrior—who, among the circle within circle of the subtlest political intrigues, baffles all intrigues, converts them into the material of his own ascendancy, and makes the subtlest and the boldest spirits his instruments and slaves—has given unanswerable evidence of the superiority of his talents. The soldier who beat down in succession all the

great military names of Europe; the negotiator who vanquished all existing diplomacy; the statesman who remodelled the laws, curbed the fiery temper, and reduced to discipline the fierce insubordination of a people flushed with a sense of irresistible victory;—last and chief trial of all—the Jacobin who cast the Republic into the grave, and made its sepulchre the foundation of his throne, must have possessed abilities of the first order.

The true solution belongs to higher views of the moral government of the globe. This man was sent for a great purpose of justice, and he was gifted with the faculties for its execution. A tremendous act of imperial guilt had been committed, of which Europe was to be purged by penalty alone. The ruin of Poland was to be made a moral to the governments of the earth; and Napoleon was to be the fiery brand that was to imprint the sentence upon the foreheads of the great criminals. It is in contemplations like those that the spirit of history ministers to the wisdom of mankind. Whatever may be the retribution for individuals beyond the grave, justice on nations must be done in this world; and *here* it will be done.

The partition of Poland was the most comprehensive and audacious crime of the modern world. It was a deliberate insult at once to the laws of nations and to the majesty of the great Disposer of nations. And never fell vengeance more immediate, more distinct, or more characteristic. The capital of Austria twice entered over the bodies of its gallant soldiery; Russia ravaged and Moscow burnt; the Prussian army extinguished by the massacre of Jena, and Prussia in a day, fettered for years,—such were the summary and solemn retributions of Heaven.

But when the penalty was paid, the fate of the executioner instantly followed. Guilt had punished guilt, and justice was to be done alike upon all. Napoleon and his empire vanished as the powder vanishes that explodes the mine. The ground was broken up; the structures of royalty on its surface were deeply fractured; the havoc was complete; but the fiery deposit which had effected the havoc was itself scattered into air.

Napoleon's fierce nature was made for execution: he wanted the greatness of mind for restoration. The re-

establishment of Poland would have been an act of consummate grandeur. It would have established a new character for the whole Revolution, It would have shown that the new spirit which had gone forth summoning the world to regeneration, was itself regeneration; that all conquest was not selfish, and all protestation not meant to deceive. If Napoleon had given Poland a diadem, and placed it on the brow of Kosciuzsko, he would, in that act, have placed on his own brow a still richer diadem, which no chance of the field could have plucked away,—a dazzling answer to all the calumnies of his age and all the doubts of posterity. He might even have built, in the restoration of the fallen kingdom, a citadel for his own security in all the casualties of empire; but at all events, he would have fixed in the political heaven a star which, to the last recollection of mankind, would have thrown light on his sepulchre, and borne his name.

The fall of the Foxite ministry opened the way to a new cabinet. and I resumed my office. But we marched in over ruins. Europe had been shattered. England had stood aloof and escaped the shock; but to stand aloof then was her crime: her sympathy might have saved the tottering system. Now all was gone. When we looked over the whole level of the Continent, we saw but two thrones, France and Russia; all the rest were crushed. England was without an ally. We had begun the war with Europe in our line of battle; we now stood alone. Yet the spirit of the nation was never bolder than in this hour, when a storm of hostility seemed to be gathering round us from every quarter of the world. Still there were voices of ill omen. It was said that France and Russia had resolved to divide the world between them; to monopolize the East and the West; to extinguish all the minor sovereignties; to abolish all the constitutions; to turn the world into two vast menageries, in which the lesser monarchies should be shown, like caged lions, for the pomp of the two lords-paramount of the globe. I heard this language from philosophers, orators, and even from statesmen; but I turned to the people, and I found the spirit of their forefathers unshaken in them still—the bold defiance of the foreigner, the national scorn of his gasconading, the desire to grapple

with his utmost strength, and the willingness, nay, the passionate desire, to rest the cause of Europe on their championship alone. I never heard among the multitude a sound of despair. They had answered the call to arms with national ardour. The land was filled with voluntary levies, and the constant cry of the people was—conflict with the enemy, anywhere, at any time, or upon any terms. More fully versed in their national history than any other European people, they remembered that in every war with France, for a thousand years, England had finished with victory. They saw that she had never suffered any one decisive defeat in the war; that wherever the forces of the two nations could come fairly into contact, their troops had always been successful; and that, from the moment when France ventured to contest the empire of the seas, all the battles of England were triumphs, until the enemy was swept from the ocean.

The new cabinet founded its plans on the national confidence, and executed them with statesmanlike decision. The struggle on the Continent was at an end; but they resolved to gird it with a chain of fire. Every port was shut up by English guns, every shore was watched by English eyes. Outside this chain the world was our own; the ocean was free; every sea was traversed by our commerce with as much security as in the most profound peace.

The recollections of the living world will long point to this period as the most menacing portion of all history. The ancient tyrannies were bold, presumptuous, and remorseless monopolies of power; but their pressure scarcely descended to the multitude. It crushed the senator, the patrician, and the man of opulence as the tempest smites the turrets of the palace, or shatters the pinnacles of the mountain range. But the despotism of France searched the humblest condition of man. It tyrannized over the cottage as fiercely as it had trampled on the thrones. In the whole immense circle of French dominion, no man could lay his head down to rest with a security that he might not be roused at midnight, to be flung into a captivity from which he was never to return. No man could look upon his property, the earnings of his manhood, the resource for his age, or the provision for his children, without the knowledge that it was at the mercy of

the military plunderer. No man could look upon the birth of his child without the bitter consciousness that another victim was preparing for the general sacrifice; or could see the ripening form or intellect of those who were given to him by Providence for the comfort and companionship of his advancing years, without a conviction that they would be swept away from him.

I am not now speaking from the natural abhorrence of the Briton for tyranny alone. The proofs are before the eye of mankind. Within little more than half the first year of the Polish campaign, three conscriptions, of eighty thousand youths each, were demanded from France alone. Two hundred and forty thousand children were torn from their parents, and sent to perish in the field, the hospital, or on the march through deserts where winter reigns in boundless supremacy!

Let the man of England rejoice that those terrible inflictions cannot be laid on him, and be grateful to the freedom which protects this most favoured nation of mankind.

But the ramparts of the supreme empire of slavery and suffering were to be shaken at last. The breach was to be made, and stormed, by England; Europe was to be summoned to follow, and achieve its own deliverance; and England was to move at the head of the proudest armament that ever marched to conquest for the liberties of mankind.

She began by a thunder-clap. The peace with Russia had laid the Czar at the mercy of France. Napoleon had intrigued to make him a confederate in the league against mankind. But the generous nature of the Russian monarch shrank from the conspiracy, and the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit were divulged to the British cabinet. I shall not now say from what authority they came; but the confidence was spontaneous, and the effect decisive. Those articles contained the outline of a plan for combining all the fleets of the Continent, and pouring final vengeance on our shores. The right wing of that tremendous armament was to be formed of the Danish and Russian fleets.

This confederacy must be broken up, or we must see a hundred and eighty ships of the line, freighted with a French and Russian army, at the mouth of the Thames. There

was not a moment to be lost, if we were to act at all; for a French force was already within a march of the Great Belt, to garrison Denmark. The question was debated in council in all its bearings. All were fully aware of the clamour which would be raised by the men who were lending themselves to every atrocity of France. We were not less prepared for the furious declamation of that professor of universal justice and protector of the rights of neutral nations, the French Emperor. But the necessity was irresistible; the act was one of self-defence; and it was executed accordingly, and with instant and incomparable vigour. A fleet and army were dispatched to the Baltic. An assault of three days gave the Danish fleet into our hands. The confederacy was broken up, and the armament returned with twenty sail of the enemy's line as trophies of the best planned and boldest expedition of the war.

Napoleon raged; but it was at finding that England could show a promptitude like his own, sanctioned by a better cause. Denmark complained pathetically of the infringement of peace before she had "completed her preparations for war;" but every man of political understanding, even in Denmark, rejoiced at her being disburdened of a fleet whose subsistence impoverished her revenues, and whose employment could only have involved her in fatal hostilities with Britain. Russia was loudest in her indignation, but a smile was mingled with her frown. Her statesmen were secretly rejoiced to be relieved from all share in the fearful enterprise of an encounter with the fleets of England; and her emperor was not less rejoiced to find that she had still the sagacity and the courage which could as little be baffled as subdued, and to which the powers of the North themselves might look for refuge in the next struggle of diadems.

This was but the dawning of the day; the sun was soon to rise. Yet public life has its difficulties in proportion to its height. The rumour reached me that there were dissensions in the cabinet; and though all was smooth to the eye, I had soon sufficient proof that the intelligence was true. A prominent member of the administration was the object of the rumour. He was an intelligent, high-spirited, and straightforward man, open in language, if the

language was not of the most classic order, and bold in his conceptions, if those conceptions were not formed on the most studied knowledge. He had attained his high position partly by public services, partly by connection. It was impossible to refuse respect to his general powers, but it was equally impossible to deny the intellectual distinctions of his competitor. The contrast which they presented in the House was decisive of their talents for debate. While the one spoke his mind with the uncultured but forcible expressions of the moment, the other never addressed the House but with the polished and pointed diction of the orator.

This man was the most accomplished of debaters, always prepared, always pungent, often powerful. Distinguished in early life for scholarship, he had brought all the finer spirit of his studies into the business of government. He was the delight of the House; and the boundless applause which followed his eloquence, and paid an involuntary tribute to his mastery of public affairs, not unnaturally stimulated his ambition to possess that leading official rank to which he seemed called by the right of nature. The rivalry at length became open and declared; it had been felt too deeply to die away among the casual impressions of public life; it had been suppressed too long to be forgiven on either side; and the crisis was evidently approaching in which it was necessary to take a part with either of those gifted men.

I seldom spent more anxious hours, in the course of an anxious life, than during the period of this deliberation. I felt all the fascinations of the man of genius. On the other hand, I respected all the solid and many qualities of his opponent. I had new ties and interests, which made official income more important to me day by day. In the fall of the administration I must follow the general fate. In making my decision with the unsuccessful candidate for power, I must go down along with him; and the claims of the competitors were so equally balanced, and both were so distinguished, that it was beyond all conjecture to calculate the result.

I too was not without many a temptation to perplex my judgment. The rivalry had at length become public, and

the friends of each were active in securing opinions among the holders of office. The whole was a lottery, but with my political existence dependent on my escaping a blank. In this dilemma I consulted my oracle, Clotilde. Her quick intelligence decided for me at once. "You must resign," said she. "You value both; you cannot side with either without offending their feelings, or, what I more regard, distressing your own. Both are men of intelligence and honour, and they will understand your motives, and respect them. To retain office is impossible."

"But, Clotilde, how can I bear the thought of reducing you and my infants to the discomforts of a narrow income and the obscurity of a life of retirement?"

"A thousand times better than you could endure the thought of retaining office against your judgment, or taking a part against a friend. Follow the impressions of your own generous nature, and you will be dearer than ever to Clotilde, even though it condemned us all to the deepest obscurity." As I took leave of her to go down to the House, her last words, as she pressed my hand, were—"Resign, and leave the rest to fortune."

A motion obviously referring to the rival claims had been appointed for the evening; and the premier was to open the debate. The House was crowded at an early hour; and as my services were required in the discussion, I postponed the communication of my resolve until the division should announce that my labours were at an end. But the hour passed away in routine business. Still the premier did not appear. The anxiety grew excessive. At length whispers ran round the benches of a rencontre between the two distinguished individuals; and, like all rumours of this nature, the results were pronounced to be of the most alarming kind. Then came the announcement that one of the combatants remained unhurt, but that the other had received a mortal wound. The House was speedily deserted, and all rushed out to ascertain the truth of this melancholy intelligence. Yet nothing certain was to be gathered among the numberless reports of the night, and I returned home harassed almost into fever. The morning quieted the general alarm. The wound was dangerous, but not mortal; and both combatants had sent in

their resignation. It was accepted by royalty; and before another night fell, I was sent for by the premier, and offered one of the vacant offices.

Such are the chances of public life. The lottery has been drawn, and mine was a prize. With what feelings I returned on that night to my fireside, with what welcome I was received by my gentle yet heroic wife, or with what eyes I glanced upon my infants as they came to ask the paternal kiss and blessing before they parted for their pillows, I leave to those who know the rejoicing of the heart to conceive.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Those events had shaken the ministry, as dissensions always have done; and it still cost us many a severe struggle to resist the force of opposition combined with the clamours of the country. England and France now presented a spectacle unexampled in the annals of hostilities; engaged in a war which seemed interminable, both determined to conquer or perish; both impelled by the most daring courage; yet neither able to inflict the slightest blow upon the other, with but fifteen miles between. France was nearer to Russia, nay, was nearer to the remotest extremity of Asia, than to England. In the midst of the fiercest war, both preserved the attitude of the most profound peace. The lion and the tiger, couching on the opposite sides of some impassible ravine, each watching the fiery eyes and naked fangs of the other, would have been the natural emblems of this hopeless thirst of encounter between the two most powerful and exasperated nations on the earth.

It is no superstition to trace those events to a higher source than man. The conclusion of this vast conflict was already written in a record above the short-sighted vision and infirm memory of our nature. For the last five hundred years of European annals France has been the allotted punisher of the Continent, and England the allotted punisher of France. I make no presumptuous attempt to explain the reason; but the process is incontestable.

The period for this consummation was now come once more.

I was sitting in my library one evening, when a stranger was introduced who had brought a letter from the officer commanding our squadron on the Spanish coast. He was a man of noble presence, of stately stature, and with a countenance exhibiting all the vivid expression of the South. He was a Spanish nobleman from the Asturias, and deputed by the authorities to demand succours in the national rising against the common enemy, Napoleon.

I was struck with the measureless value of resistance in a country which opened to us the whole flank of France; but the intelligence was so wholly unexpected, so entirely beyond calculation, and at the same time so pregnant with the highest results to England, that I was long incredulous. But the Asturian was firm in his assurances, clear and consistent in his views, and there was even a candour in his confession of the unprepared state of his country, which added largely to my confidence. Our dialogue was, I believe, unprecedented for the plainness of its inquiries and replies. It was perfectly Lacedæmonian.

"What regular force can Spain bring into the field?"

"None."

"What force has Napoleon in Spain at this moment?"

"At least two hundred and fifty thousand men, and those in the highest state of equipment and discipline."

"And yet you venture to resist?"

"We have resisted, we shall resist, and we shall beat them."

"In what state are your fortresses?"

"One half of them in the hands of the French, and the other half without garrisons, provisions, or even guns; still we shall beat them."

"Are not the French troops in possession of all the provinces?"

"Yes."

"Are they not, in fact, masters of the country?"

"No."

"How am I to reconcile those statements?"

"The French are masters by day, the Spaniards are masters by night."

"But you have none of the elements of national government. You have lost your king."

"So much the better."

"Your princes, nobles, and court."

"So much the better."

"Even your prime minister and whole administration are in the hands of the enemy."

"Best of all!" said the respondent, with a frown like a thunder-cloud.

"What resource, then, have you?"

"The people!" exclaimed the Spaniard, in a tone of superb defiance.

"Still—powerful as a united people are—before you can call upon a British government to embark in such a contest, it must be shown that the people are capable of acting together; that they are not separated by the jealousies which proverbially divide your country."

"Señor Inglese," said the Don, with a Cervantic curl of the lip, "I see that Spain has not been neglected among the studies of your high station. But Spain is *not* to be studied in books."

"But," said I, "the disunion of your provinces, the extinction of your army, and the capture of your executive government, must leave the country naked to invasion. The contest may be gallant, but the hazard must be formidable. To sustain a war against the disciplined troops of France and the daring determination of its ruler, would require a new age of miracle." The Spaniard bit his lip, and was silent. "At all events, your proposals do honour to the spirit of your country, and I shall not be the man to throw obstacles in your way. Draw up a memoir; state your means, your objects, and your intentions, distinctly; and I shall lay it before the government without delay."

"Señor Inglese, it shall be done. In that memoir I shall simply say that Spain has six ranges of mountains, all impregnable, and that the Spanish people are resolved to defend them; that the country is one vast natural fortress; that the Spanish soldier can sleep on the sand, can live on the simplest food, and the smallest quantity of that food; that he can march fifty miles a-day; that he is of the same blood with the conquerors of the Moors and with the soldiers

of Charles V.; and that he requires only discipline and leaders to equal the glory of his forefathers." His fine features glanced with manly exultation.

"Your provinces are scarcely less hostile to each other than they are to the enemy. What plan can unite them in one system of defence? and, without that union, how can resistance be effectual?"

"Spain stands alone," was the reply. "Her manners, her feelings, and her people, have no examples in Europe. Her war will have as little similarity to the wars of its governments. It will be a war, not of armies, but of the shepherd, of the artificer, the muleteer, the contrabandist,—a war of all classes, the peasant, the priest, the noble, nay, the beggar on the highway. But this was the war of her ancestors, the war of the Asturias, which cleared the country of the Moors, and will clear it of the French. With all Spain a mass of hostility, a living tide of unquenchable hatred and consuming fire, the French battalions pouring over the Pyrenees will be like battalions poured into the ocean. They will be engulfed; they will never return. Our provinces are divided, but they have one invincible bond—abhorrence of the French. Even their division is not infirmity, but strength."

The councils of England in this crisis were worthy of her ancient name. It was resolved to forget the long injuries of which Spain had been the instrument during her passive submission to the arrogance of her ally and master. The Spanish Bourbons were now gone; the nation was disencumbered of that government of chamberlains, maids of honour, and duennas. It was to be no longer stifled in the perfumed atmosphere of court boudoirs, or to be chilled in the damps of the cloister. Its natural and noble proportions were to be left unfettered and undisguised by the formal fashions of past centuries of grave frivolity and decorous degradation. The giant was to rise refreshed.

Those were the dreams of England, but they were high-toned and healthy dreams—the anticipations of a great country accustomed to the possession of freedom, and expecting to plant national regeneration wherever it set foot upon the soil. The cause of Spain was universally adopted by the people, and was welcomed by parliament with acclamation; the appointment of a minister to represent the cabinet in

Spain was decided on, and this distinguished commission was pressed upon my personal sense of duty by the premier.

Within another week the frigate which conveyed me was flying before the breeze, along the iron-bound shore of Galicia. At length the bay of Corunna opened before us our anchor dropped, and I made my first step on the most picturesque shore, and among the most original people, of Europe.

My destination was Madrid; but it was essential that I should ascertain all the facts in my power from the various provincial governments as I passed along. And I thus obtained a more ample knowledge of the people than could have fallen to the lot of the ordinary traveller. I consulted with their juntas, I was present at their festivals, I rode with their hidalgos, and I marched with their troops.

One of the peculiarities which, as an Englishman, has always interested me in foreign travel is, that it brings us back to a period different from the existing age at home.

In Spain I found myself in the thirteenth century, and, but for the language, the heat, and the brown visages around me, could have imagined myself in England, in the days when "barons bold" still exercised the rights of feudalism, when gallant archers killed the king's deer without the king's permission, and when the priest was the lawgiver of the land.

As my mission was but temporary, and might be attended with personal hazard, I had left Clotilde in England, much to her regret, and travelled with as small a retinue as possible—in general by unfrequented ways, to avoid the French patrols, which were already spread through the neighbourhood of the high roads. But, at Burgos, the Spanish commandant, on the delivery of my passport, insisted so strongly on the necessity of an escort, placing the wish on a feeling of his personal responsibility in case of my falling into the enemy's hands, that, to save the señor's conscience, or his commission, I consented to take a few troopers, with one of his aides-de-camp, to see me in safety through the Sierra Morena.

The aide-de-camp was a *character*—a little, meagre being, who, after a long life of idleness and half-pay, was suddenly called into service, and now figured in a staff-coat and feather. He talked without mercy as we rode along, and gave his opinions with all the easy conviction of an "officer on the staff,"

and all the freedom of the wilderness. His opinion of Spanish politics was, that they owed their occasional mistakes solely to the culpable negligence of the war-minister "in overlooking the gallant subalterns of the national army."

"If justice had been done," exclaimed the new-feathered warrior, rising in his stirrups, and waving his hand, as if he was in the act of cleaving down a Moor, "*I* should long since have been a general. If I had been a general, the armies of Spain would long since have been on a very different footing. Men of merit would have been placed in their proper positions; the troops would have emulated the exploits of their ancestors in the age of Ferdinand and Isabella; and, instead of receiving a king from France, we should have given her one.

I laughed; but my ill-timed mirth had nearly cost me an "affair of honour" with the little regenerator. His hand was instantly on the hilt of his sword, and every wrinkle on his brown visage was swelling into wrath, when my better genius prevailed. He probably recollected that he was sent as my protector, and that the office would not have been fulfilled according to his instructions by running me through the midriff. But, with all his pomposity, he had the national good-nature; and when we sat down to our chicken and bottle of Tinto, in one of those soft and sheltered valleys, he was full of remorse for his burst of patriotic temper.

The day had been a continued blaze of sunshine, the road a burning sand, and the contrast of the spot where we made our halt was tempting. The scene was rich and *riant*, the evening lovely, and the wine good. I could have reposed there for a month, or a year, or for ever. It would have been enough to make a man turn hermit; and I instinctively gazed round, to look for the convent which "must lie" in so luxurious a site. My companion informed me that I was perfectly right in my conjecture, that spot having been the position of one of the richest brotherhoods in Spain. But its opulence had been unluckily displayed in rather too ostentatious a style in the eyes of a French brigade, who, in consequence, packed up the plate in their baggage, and, in the course of a tumult which followed with the peasantry, burned the building to the ground.

He was in the act of filling a bumper to the "downfall

of all monkery on the face of the earth," when the report of a musket was heard, and the bottle was shivered in his hand.

The honour of Don Ignacio Trueno Relampago was never in greater danger, for he instantly turned much whiter than his own pocket-handkerchief: but the Spaniard is a brave fellow after all, and, seeing that I drew out my pistols, he drew his sword, ordered his troopers to mount, and prepared for battle. But who can fight against fortune? Our horses, which had been picketed at a few yards' distance in the depth of the shade, were gone. A French battalion of tirailleurs, accidentally coming on our route, had surrounded the grove, and carried off the horses unperceived, while our gallant troopers where chorusing the songster. The sentinel left in charge of them had, of course, given way to the allurements of "sweet nature's kind restorer, balmy sleep," and awoke only to find himself in French hands.

Don Ignacio would have fought a legion of fiends, but seven hundred and fifty sharpshooters were a much more unmanageable affair; and on our holding a council of war (which never fights), and with a whole circle of bayonets glittering at our breasts, I advised a surrender without loss of time. The troopers were already disarmed, and the Don, appealing to me as evidence that he had done all that could be required by the most punctilious valour, surrendered his sword with the grace of a hero of romance.

The colonel of the tirailleurs was a complete specimen of the revolutionary soldier. He was a dashing figure, with a bronzed face, or at least so much of it as I could discover through the most inordinate pair of moustachios ever worn by a warrior. He was ignorant of everything on earth but his profession, and laughed at the waste of time in poring over books, his travelling-library consisting of but two—the imperial army-list, and the muster-roll of his regiment. His family recollections went no higher than his father, a cobbler in Languedoc. But he was a capital officer, and the very material for a *chef-de-bataillon*—rough, brave, quick, and as hardy as iron. Half a dozen scars gave evidence of his having shared the glories of France on the Rhine, the Po, and the Danube; and a cross of the Legion of Honour showed that his emperor was a different person from the object of

Don Ignacio's cureless wrath, the war-minister who "made a point of neglecting all possible merit below that of a field-marshal."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE Frenchman, with all his *brusquerie*, was civil enough to regret my capture, "particularly as it laid him under the necessity of taking me far from my route,—his regiment then making forced marches to Andalusia, to join Dupont's division, and, for the purpose of secresy, the strictest orders having been given that the prisoners which they might make in the way should be carried along with them." As I had forwarded my official papers from Galicia to Castile, and was regarded simply as an English tourist, I had no sense of personal hazard; and, putting the best complexion which I could upon my misadventure, I rode along with the column over hill and dale, enjoying the various aspects of one of the most varied and picturesque countries in the world. Our marches were rapid, but chiefly by night, thus evading at once the intolerable heat of the Spanish day, and collisions with the people. We bivouacked in the shelter of woods, or in the shadow of hills, during the sultry hours, and recommenced our march in the cool of the eve, with short halts, until sunrise. Then we flung ourselves again under the shade of the trees, and enjoyed those delights of rest and appetite which are unknown to all but to the marchers and fasters for twelve hours together.

But, on our crossing the Sierra Morena, and taking the direction of Andalusia, the scene was wholly changed. The country was like one vast field of battle. The peasants were everywhere in arms, villages were seen burning along the horizon, and our constant vigilance was necessary to guard against a surprise. Every soldier who lay down to rest but a few yards from the column, or who attempted to forage the villages, was sure to be shot or stilettoed; provisions were burned before our faces; and even where we were not actually fired on, the frowns of the population showed sufficiently that the day of revenge was at hand.

At length we reached the range of hills which surround the plain of Cordova, yet only just in time to see the

army of Dupont marching out from the city gates in the direction of Andujar. As I stood beside the colonel, I could observe, by the knitting of his brow, that the movement did not satisfy his military sagacity. "What a quantity of baggage!" he murmured; "how will it be possible to carry such a train through the country, or how to fight with such an encumbrance embarrassing every step? Unless the Spanish generals are the greatest fools on earth, or unless Dupont has a miracle worked for him, he must either abandon three-fourths of his wagons, or be ruined."

But I was now to have a nearer interest in the expedition. The battalion had no sooner joined the army on its advance than I was ordered to appear before the chief of the staff. The language of this officer was brief, but expressive.

"You are a spy."

"You are misinformed. I am a gentleman and an Englishman."

"Look here." He produced a copy of my letter to the junta of Castile, which some clerk in the French pay had treacherously transmitted from Madrid. "What answer have you to this?"

I flung the letter on the table.

"What right have you to require an answer? I have not come voluntarily to the quarters of the French army—I am a prisoner; I am not even in a military capacity. You would only act in conformity to the law of nations by giving me my liberty this moment; and I demand that you shall do your duty."

"I shall do it. If you have any arrangements to make, you had better lose no time; for I wait only the general's signature to my report to have you shot." He turned on his heel. A sergeant with a couple of grenadiers entered, and I was consigned for the night to the provost-marshal. How anxiously I spent that night I need not say. I was in the hands of violent men, exasperated by the popular resistance, and accustomed to disregard life. I braced myself up to meet my untoward catastrophe, and determined at least not to disgrace my country by helpless solicitation. I wrote a few letters, committed myself to a protection above the passions and vices of man, wrapped my cloak round me, and sank into a sound slumber.

I was aroused by the discharge of cannon, and found the camp in commotion. The Spaniards, under Reding and Castaños, had, as the colonel anticipated, fallen upon our line of march at daybreak, and cut off a large portion of the baggage-train. It had been loaded with the church-plate and general plunder of Cordova; and the avarice of the French had obviously involved them in formidable difficulty. But, even in the universal tumult, the importance of my seizure was not forgotten, and I was ordered to the rear in charge of a guard. The action now began on all sides, the cannonade rapidly deepening on the flank and centre of the French position, and the musketry already beginning to rattle on various points of the line. From the height on which I stood the whole scene lay beneath my eye; and nothing could have been better worth the speculation of any man—who was not under sentence of being shot as soon as the struggle was over.

I was aware of the reputation of the French general. He held a high name among the *braves* of the imperial army for the last ten years, and he had been foremost everywhere. In the desperate Italian campaign against the Austrians and Russians, in the victorious campaign of Austerlitz, in the sanguinary campaign of Eylau, Dupont was one of the most daring of generals of brigade. But his pillage of Cordova had roused the Spanish wrath into fury; and the effort to carry off his plunder made it impossible for him to resist a vigorous attack, even with his twenty thousand veterans. He had indulged himself in Cordova until the broken armies of the south had found time to rally; and a force of fifty thousand men was now marching down upon his centre. The hills, as far as the eye could range, were covered with the armed peasantry, moving like dark clouds over their sides, and descending by thousands to the field. The battle now raged furiously in the centre, and the charges of the French cavalry made fearful gaps in the Spanish battalions.

At length the rising of the dust on the right showed that a strong column was approaching which might decide the day. My heart beat slow as I saw the tricolor floating above its bayonets. It was the advanced guard, with Dupont at its head—a force of three thousand men, which had returned rapidly on its steps as soon as the sound of the attack had

reached it. It was boldly resisted by the Swiss and Walloon brigades of the Spanish line; but the French fire was heavy, its manœuvre was daring, and I began to fear for the fate of the day, when a loud explosion and a hurried movement at the extreme of the French position, turned my eyes to the left wing. There the Spanish attack had swept everything before it. Brigade after brigade was giving way, and the country was covered with scattered horsemen, infantry retiring in disorder, and broken and captured guns. The peasantry, too, had joined in the pursuit, and the whole wing seemed utterly ruined.

To retrieve this disorder was now hopeless, for the French general had extended his line to the extraordinary length of ten miles. His baggage-train was his ruin. The whole Spanish line now advanced, shouting, and only halting at intervals to cannonade the enemy. The French returned a feeble fire, and began to retreat. But retreat was now impossible, and they must fight or be massacred. At this moment I saw an officer, from the spot where Dupont sat on his charger, surrounded by his staff, gallop between the two armies. He was met by a Spanish officer. The firing ceased. Dupont had surrendered, with all the troops in Andalusia!

I was now at liberty, and I was received by the Spanish commander-in-chief with the honours due to my mission and my country. After mutual congratulations on this most brilliant day, I expressed my wish to set off for Madrid without delay. An escort of cavalry was ordered for me, and by midnight I had left behind me the slaughter and the triumph, the noblest of Spanish fields, the immortal Baylen.

The night was singularly dark; and as the byroads of the Peninsula are confessedly among the most original specimens of the road-making art, our attention was chiefly occupied, for the first hour, in finding our way in Indian file. At length, on the country's opening, I rode forward to the head of the troop, and addressed some questions to the officer, on our distance from the next town. He at once pronounced my name, and my astonishment was not less than his own. In the commandant of the escort I found my gallant though most wayward friend, Lafontaine!

His story was brief. In despair of removing Mordecai's

reluctance to their marriage, and wholly unable to bring over Mariamne to his own opinion, that she would act the wiser part in taking the chances of the world along with himself, he had resolved to enter the Russian or the Turkish service, or any other in which he had the speediest probability of ending his career by a bullet or a sabre-blow. The accidental rencontre of one of his relations, an officer high in the Spanish service, had led him into the Peninsula, where, as a royalist, he was warmly received by a people devoted to their kings, and had just received a commission in the cavalry of the guard when the French war broke out. He felt no scruples in acting as a soldier of Spain; for, with the death of Louis, he had regarded all his nationalities as broken, and he was now a citizen of the world.

I ventured to mention the name of Mariamne; and I found that there at least inconstancy had no place. He spoke of her with eloquent tenderness, and it was evident that, with all his despair of ever seeing her again, she still held the first place in his heart. In this wandering, yet by no means painful, interchange of thoughts, we moved on for some hours, when one of the advanced troopers rode back to tell us that he had heard firing in the distance.

We galloped forward, and from the brow of the next hill saw flames rising from a village in the valley beneath, and a skirmish going on between some marauding troops and the peasantry. Lafontaine instantly ordered an advance; and our whole troop were soon in the centre of the village, busily employed with the pistol and sabre. The French, taken by surprise, made but a slight resistance, and, after a few random shots, ran to a neighbouring wood.

I was in the act of congratulating him on his easy success when he pointed out to me a Spanish post-carriage driving at a desperate rate towards the neighbouring wood; a French soldier was on the foremost mule, and a couple of dragoons were in full gallop along with him. It was evident that they were carrying off a prisoner, and probably the plunder of the village. Our whole party were instantly in pursuit, and we came up with them as the carriage-wheel became entangled in the thicket. One of the dragoons fired; Lafontaine knocked him off his horse with a blow of his sabre, and threw open the door of the carriage. Within I could only

discover, by the light of a lantern, that there was a human figure; but it lay as if dead on a heap of plate and other valuables, evidently the pillage of the party.

Turning to Lafontaine, I asked what was to be done with our capture, but he made me no answer. He had dismounted, and, to my great alarm, I saw that the shot of the dragoon had taken effect; his sword-arm had been hit, and his countenance exhibited excessive pain.

The villagers, by this time, had crowded round us, and my first inquiry was for some shelter for my wounded friend. I was answered that we were but a few hundred yards from the mansion of an "hidalgo" of great wealth, and known for his munificence to the people. As the stranger seemed to be as much in hazard as my friend, I ordered them both to be taken to the house of the hidalgo. Our procession now moved on through the forest, accompanied by many a *viva*, until we arrived within sight of the mansion.

The house was old, but large and handsome, and the furniture of the apartment into which we were shown was singularly tasteful and costly. Who the owner was seemed scarcely known among the bold fellows who accompanied us; but I shortly received a message from him, to tell me that as soon as the crowd should be dismissed, he would visit the officer. The apartment was cleared, and he came.

This was a new wonder for me. It was Mordecai that entered the room. The light was still so imperfect, that for a while he could not recognize either of us; and when I advanced to take his hand, and addressed him by his name, he started back, as if he had trod upon a snake.

But, recovering himself, he held out his hand and said, "Sir, you have done me a service too serious this morning to allow me to stand upon ceremony with you. You and your friend are welcome to all that my house can offer. But I must beg of you not to repeat my name in the presence of my servants. This is the country of prejudices."

He was evidently enfeebled by the events of the hour, for he proceeded in a faint tone to tell us that he had been the prisoner whom we rescued, the French skirmishers having plundered his house of its plate, and carried him away in the hope of a ransom, or to death if the hope failed them. I now announced myself; and whether from a sense of safety, or the

recollection of other times, he heard it with unequivocal gladness. He was now in full possession of all his faculties. An hour before he had been in hands from which he received only insults, and expected only death. He almost embraced me. He was profuse in his gratitude to us all, declaring that to me and my brave friend he was indebted infinitely more than he could ever repay. He was about to repeat his thanks "to the captain," in person, who lay with his head wrapped in his cloak upon the sofa, and groaning with the torture of his wound, when, fearing the effects on the nerves of my invalid friend, I hurried Mordecai into another apartment, and there heard his brief history since we had parted.

Mariamne had suddenly grown discontented with Poland, which to Mordecai himself had become a weary residence, from the ravages of the French war. "For some reason, unaccountable to me," said the old man, "she set her heart upon Spain, and had now been domiciled in this secluded spot for a year. But she was visibly fading away. She read and wrote much, and was even more attached to her harp and her flowers than ever, yet declared that she had bid farewell to the world." The father wept as he spoke. but his were the tears of sorrow rather than of anguish. They stole quietly down his cheeks, and showed that the stern and haughty spirit was subdued within him.

I had not ventured to allude to Lafontaine; but the current of his own thoughts at length led to that forbidden topic. "I am afraid, Mr. Marston," said he, "that I have been too harsh with my child. I looked for her alliance with some of the opulent among my own kindred; or I should have rejoiced if your regards had been fixed on her, and hers on you. And in those dreams I forgot that the affections must choose for themselves. I had no objection to the young Frenchman but that he was a stranger and was poor. Yet are not we ourselves strangers? and if he was poor, was not I rich? But all is over now; and I shall only have to follow my poor Mariamne where I should have much rather preceded her—to the grave."

I now requested to see Mariamne. She met me with a cry of joy and with a cheek of sudden crimson; but, when the first flush passed away, her looks gave painful proof of the effect of solitude and sorrow. The rounded beauty of her

cheek was gone; her eyes, once dancing with every emoti were fixed and hollow; and her frame, once remarkable symmetry, was thin and feeble. But, her heart was buoya still, and when I talked of past scenes and recollections h eye sparkled once more. Still her manner was changed— was softer and less capricious; her language, even her voic was subdued. At length, after hearing some slight detail her wanderings, and her fears that the troubles of Spa might drive her from a country in whose genial climate an flowery fields "she had hoped to end her days," I incidentall asked whether, in all her wanderings, she had heard of "m friend Lafontaine." How impossible is it to deceive th instinct of the female heart! The look which she gave me, th searching glance of her fine eyes, which flashed with all their former lustre, and the sudden quivering of her lip, told me how deeply his image was fixed in her recollection. She saw at once that I had tidings of her lover, and she hung upon the hand which I held out to her with breathless and beseeching anxiety. I now discovered that it was some rumour of his having crossed the Pyrenees which awoke her sudden partiality for a residence in Spain. After some precautions, I revealed to her the facts—that he was as faithfully devoted to her as ever, and—that he was even under her roof!

I leave the rest of her story to be conjectured.

I was present at the marriage of Lafontaine. The trials of fortune had been of infinite service to *him;* they had sobered his eccentricity, taught him the value of a quiet mind, and prepared him for that manlier career which belongs to the husband and the father. I left them, thanking me in all the language of gratitude, promising to visit me in England.

My mission to the junta was speedily and successfully accomplished. Spain, in want of everything but that which no subsidy could supply—a determination to die in the last entrenchment—was offered arms, ammunition, and the aid of an English army. In her pride, and yet a pride which none could blame, she professed herself able to conquer by her own intrepidity. Later experience showed her, by many a suffering, the value of England as the guide, sustainer, and example of her national strength. But Spain had still the

gallant distinction of being the first nation which, as one man, dared to defy the conqueror of all the great military powers of the Continent. The sieges of Saragossa and Gerona will immortalize the courage of the Spanish soldier; the guerilla campaigns will immortalize the courage of the Spanish peasant; and the memorable confession of the French emperor, that "Spain was his greatest error, and his ultimate ruin," is a testimonial, more lasting than the proudest trophy, to the magnanimous warfare of the Peninsula.

This was the crisis. The spirit of the whole European war now assumed a bolder, loftier, and more triumphant form. A sudden conviction filled the general heart that the fortunes of the field were about to change. Nations which had till then been only emulous in prostration to the universal conqueror, now assumed the port of courage, prepared their arms, and longed to try their cause again in battle. The outcry of Spain, answered by the trumpet of England, pierced to the depths of that dungeon in which the intrigue and the power of France had laboured to bury the continental nations.

For the first time in the history of war, it was discovered that the true force of kingdoms had been mistaken—a mistake which had lasted for a thousand years; that armies were but splendid machines; and that, while they might be crushed by the impulse of machines more rapid, stronger, and more skilfully directed, nothing could crush the vigour of defence supplied by a people.

The *levée en masse* of France was but the rudest, as it was the earliest, form of the new discovery. There terror was the moving principle. The conscription was the recruiting-officer. The guillotine was the commander, who manœuvred the generals, the troops, and the nation. Yet the revolutionary armies differed in nothing from the monarchical but in the superiority of their numbers and the inferiority of their discipline.

The war of Spain was another and a nobler advance. It was the war of a nation; in France the war was the conspiracy of a faction. In Spain the loss of the capital only inflamed the hostility of the provinces; in France the loss of the capital would have extinguished the Revolution, as it afterwards extinguished the Empire. I think that I can see

the provision for a still bolder and more beneficent advance even in those fierce developments of national capabilities. But it will perhaps be left to other nations.

The system of the war was now fully established. All the feelings of England were fixed on the Peninsula, and all the politics of her statesmen and their rivals were alike guided by the course of the conflict. The prediction was gallantly fulfilled—that the French empire would there expose its flank to English intrepidity; that the breaching battery which was to open the way to Paris would be fixed on the Pyrenees; and that the true "sign of conquest" was the banner of England.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE battle of the ministry was fought in Spain, and as victoriously as the battle of our army. We saw opposition gradually throw away its weapons, and gradually diminish in the popular view until its existence was scarcely visible. Successive changes varied the cabinet, but none shook its stability. Successive ministers sank into the grave, but the ministry stood. Perceval perished; but the political system of the cabinet remained unchanged. Castlereagh perished—Liverpool perished; but the political system still survived. The successive pilots might give up the helm, but the course of the great vessel of the state continued the same—guided by the same science, and making her way, through sunshine and through storm, to the same point of destination.

The three successive ministers were men of high ability for government, though the character of their ability exhibited the most remarkable distinctions. Perceval had been a lawyer. To the House he carried the acuteness, the logic, and even the manner of his profession with him. Long maintaining a bold resistance at the head of the feeblest minority perhaps ever known in parliament, he had shown unshaken courage and undismayed principle. This defence was at length turned into assault, and his opponents were driven from power. His ministry was only too brief for his fame. But, when he fell by the hand of a maniac, he left a universal im-

pression on the mind of the empire that the blow had deprived it of a great ministerial mind.

Castlereagh exhibited a character of a totally different order, yet equally fitted for his time. An Irishman, he had the habitual intrepidity of his countrymen. Nobly connected, and placed high in public life by that connection, he showed himself capable of sustaining his ministerial rank by his personal capacity. Careless of style, he was yet an effective debater. But it was in the council that his value to the country was most acknowledged. His conception of the rights, the influence, and the services of England, was lofty; and, when the period came for deciding on her rank in the presence of continental diplomacy, he was her chosen and her successful representative. His natural place was among the councils of camps where sovereigns were the soldiers. The "march to Paris" was due to his courage, and the first fall of Napoleon was effected by the ambassador of England.

Lord Liverpool was a man equally fitted for his time. The war had triumphantly closed. But a period of perturbed feelings and financial necessities followed; it required in the minister a combination of sound sense and practical vigour—of deference for the public feelings, yet respect for the laws—of promptitude in discovering national resources, and yet of firmness in repelling factious change. The head of the cabinet possessed those qualities. No man formed his views with clearer intelligence, and no man pursued them with more steady determination. The nation relied on his sincerity, honoured his purity of principle, and willingly confided its safety to hands which none believed capable of a stain.

At length the consummation came: the French empire fell on the field by the hand of England. All the sovereigns of Europe rushed in to strip the corpse, and each carried back a portion of the spoils. But the conqueror was content with the triumph, and asked no more glory than the liberation of mankind.

In the midst of these colossal events all personal interests sink into trifles. And yet fortune had not neglected to reward the gentler virtues of one worthy of its noblest gifts. In my first campaign with the Prussian troops in France, I had intrusted to the care of the old domestic whom I found

in the Château de Montauban an escritoire and a picture belonging to the family of Clotilde. The old man had disappeared, and I took it for granted that he had been plundered or had died.

But one day, after my return from the splendid entertainment with which the regent welcomed the allied sovereigns, I found Clotilde deeply agitated. The picture of her relative was before her, and she was gazing at its singularly expressive and lovely countenance with intense interest.

She flew into my arms. "I have longed for your coming," said she, with glowing lips and tearful eyes, "to offer at least one proof of gratitude for years of the truest protection and the most generous love. Michelle, the husband of my nurse, has arrived, and he tells me that this escritoire contains the title-deeds of my family. I was resolved that you alone should open it. In the frame of that picture, in a secret drawer, is the key." The spring was touched, the key was found; and in the little chest was discovered, uninjured by chance or time, the document entitling my beautiful and high-hearted wife to one of the finest possessions in France. By a singular instance of good fortune, the property had not been alienated, like so many of the estates of the noblesse; and it now lay open to the claims of the original proprietorship.

I hastened to Paris. My claim was acknowledged by the returned Bourbon, and Clotilde had the delight of once more sitting under the vine and the fig-tree of her ancestors. The old domestic had made it the business of years to obtain the means of reaching England. But the war placed obstacles in his way everywhere; and he devoted himself thenceforth to the guardianship of his precious deposit as the duty of his life. The wheel now turned for myself, and I had to draw a prize in the great lottery of fortune.

On the evening of my birth-day Clotilde had given a rustic *fête* to the children of her tenantry; and all were dancing in front of the château, with the gaiety and with the grace which nature seems to have conferred as an especial gift on even the humblest classes of France.

The day was one of the luxury of summer. The landscape before me was a rich extent of plain and hill; the fragrance of the vast gardens of the château was rising as

the twilight approached; my infants were clustering round my knee; and in that thankfulness of heart which is not the less sincere for its not being expressed in words, I came to the conclusion that no access of wealth or of honours could add to my substantial happiness at that hour.

My reverie was broken by the sound of a *calèche* driving up the avenue. A courier alighted from it, who brought a letter with a black seal addressed to me. It was from the family solicitor. My noble brother had died in Madeira, whither he had gone in the hopeless attempt to recruit a frame which he had enervated by a life of excess.

In that hour I gave him the regrets which belonged to the tie of blood. I forgot his selfishness, and forgave his alienation. I thought of him only as the remembered playfellow of my early days, and could say in heart, "Alas, my brother!" The landscape before me at last sank into night; and with feelings darkened like it, yet calm and still, I saw the closing of a day which, painful as was the cause, yet called me to new duties, gave me a stronger hold upon society, and placed me in that position which I fully believe to combine more of the true materials of happiness and honour than any other on earth—that of an opulent English nobleman.

My brother dying childless had devolved the family estates to me, disburdened of the results of his prodigality; but I had still much to occupy me in restoring them from the neglect of years. The life of the member of government was now to alternate with the life of the country gentleman; and my transfer to the House of Peers gave me that comparative leisure essential to the fulfilment of the large and liberal duties which belong to the English landholder. To cheer the country life by rational hospitality; to make friends of those whom nature has made dependents; to sustain those laws by which the rights of every man are sustained; to excite the country gentleman to the study of that noblest and most primitive of all arts, the cultivation of the soil; to maintain among that bold and generous race a high sense of their purposes, their position, and their powers; to invigorate the principles which had always made them the surest defenders of the throne in its day of adversity; and to fix in their minds by example, more powerful than precept, a sense

of solemn fidelity to the faith and freedom of their ancestors. —these were the objects which I proposed to myself, and which the most powerful intellect or the highest rank would be well employed in labouring to fulfil.

Yet with those tranquil and retired pursuits I continued to mingle the activity of public life. I still bore my part in the discussions of the legislature. I still retained all my early sensibility to the enjoyments which Providence has so largely distributed through life. Marriage itself freshens the feelings of man, gives him a sense of the nobler affections, and invigorates the heart, by fixing it on an object to which the devotion of all its finer impulses is due. But I also remembered the difficulty of making new friendships, and I the more faithfully sustained the old. From Guiscard and Vornhorst I heard at intervals; and with Lafontaine and his Mariamne a correspondence was kept up, rendered interesting by the graceful animation of the husband, and the piquant mixture of native romance and personal talent in the wife. They had fixed their abode on the banks of the Gave in one of their loveliest spots, and with Pau in the distance, and surrounded by their vineyards and gardens, seemed to realize a scene in Arcadia. Guiscard had obtained the diplomatic distinctions for which his profound ability was framed, and held a high place in the councils of Prussia. Vornhorst, my gallant and good-humoured comrade, as true a heart as ever beat under the uniform of a general of dragoons, had obtained the government of an Hungarian province, and was revelling in all the delights of a rank which made him the model of the troops, the entertainer of the nobility, and the friend of everybody.

"Come and see me," he wrote, "and come before I am grown too fat to ride after the fleetest pack of staghounds between Buda and Constantinople. To-day I give a dinner to the staff, on my eldest boy's receiving his first commission in the imperial guards. The first toast after the emperor, to-day, shall be the health of my friend Marston."

On the same day I received a letter from Mordecai. It was dated from the Pyrenees, whither he had gone to nurse his increasing years, under the care of his daughter and her husband.

After some personal inquiries, and telling me that it was

"his tribute to the birthday of one whom years had only taught him to esteem," it broke off into his own contemplations. "I am writing at the dawn of day. All the household are hushed. The early rising peasantry alone are seen in motion, driving their sheep up to the hills. I see the whole extent of Pau from my chamber window, but not a smoke rises from a city of twenty thousand people. The pure air of this early hour shows me the château of Henri Quatre, like a model, with every tint of time on the stone, every lichen clinging to the crevices of the towers, and every coat of arms on the gates and battlements. But before me, throwing all the works of man into immeasurable littleness, sweeps the whole amphitheatre of the Pyrenees, a range of a hundred and fifty miles, a magnificent succession of vast slopes coloured with every successive hue, of tillage, forest, green pasture, rock glittering in the sun, and above all, the snowy range, glowing with the purple and rose of morning. In what a glorious world do we live! What splendours are lavished on this wilderness of mountains!

"The thought occurs to me at this moment, may not all nature be but a display for beings superior to man, whose eye is never closed, and whose faculties never slumber? Are the brilliancies of the diamond in its matrix to be lost until it falls into the hands of man? For what purpose are the infinite varieties of beauty which vegetation exhibits on untrodden shores—the grandeurs of sunset on the ocean—the thousand powerful and rich phenomena of nature, the meteor, the aurora, and the comet, passing as they do when the senses of man are closed in sleep? Can they be meant for the eye of man alone? Are there not other beings that walk the earth—forms nobler than our own, yet invisible; with senses more powerful, refined, and vivid than ours; and carrying on the great designs of Providence without our knowledge or our help, as man would carry on the little works and watchings of this world while all his children were slumbering in their cradles around him?"

The letter then adverted to the state of European politics, on which he cast a foreboding glance, and in which he seemed to think that England was destined to take, as she had already done so often, the leading place in the general trial.

"Yet," said he, "I have seen in the whole course of the

past trial of nations a guardian hand so palpably stretched over England, that I have strong faith in her security.

"In the great war of our time, the greatest since the fall of the Roman empire, the war of the French Revolution—I think that I can trace a divine protection distinctly given to England as the champion of Europe.

"Let me give the examples.—The French expedition to Egypt was formed with the express object of breaking down the influence of England in the East, and ultimately subverting her Indian empire. That expedition was the *first* which tarnished the military renown of the Republic; it cost her a fleet, and lost her an army. Of the army which Napoleon led to Egypt, not a battalion returned to Europe but as the prisoners of England!

"The French invasion of Spain was a blow aimed *expressly* at England. Its object was the invasion of England. The Spanish war broke down the military renown of the Empire, and was pronounced by Napoleon to be the origin of his ruin.

"The invasion of Russia was a blow aimed *expressly* at England. Its object was the extinction of English commerce in the whole sea-line of the north. That invasion was punished by the ruin of the whole veteran army of France!

"Napoleon himself at length met the troops of England, He met them with an arrogant assumption of victory—'*Ah! je les tiens, ces Anglais.*' Never was presumption more deeply punished. That one conflict *destroyed* him; his laurels, his diadem, and his dynasty, were blasted together!

"It is not less memorable that during the entire revolutionary war, France was never suffered to inflict an injury on England, with one exception—the perfidious seizure of the English travelling in the French territories under the safeguard of the imperial passports. But this too had its punishment, and one marked by the most especial and characteristic retribution. Napoleon himself was sent to a dungeon! The man who had treacherously made prisoners of the English, himself died the prisoner of England!"

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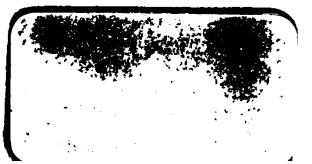

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